

# **Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council**



**Council Meeting  
Wednesday 16 September 2026**

## OLDHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

To: ALL MEMBERS OF OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL,  
JR CLYNES BUILDING, GREAVES STREET, OLDHAM, OL1 1AL  
Tuesday, 8 September 2026

**You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council which will be held on Wednesday 16 September 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 - 20)  
  
To order that the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2026 and on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2026 (Extraordinary meeting), 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 (Pages 21 - 24)  
  
*(time limit 20 minutes)*  
To note, in line with the petitions protocol, the petitions received in the Municipal Year 2025/26 and those received to date during 2026/2027 which received over the required 50 signatures.
- 7 Youth Council  
  
There is not a Youth Council Motion for this meeting of the Council to consider.
- 8 Public Questions  
  
*(time limit 30 Minutes)*
- 9 Questions to Leader and Cabinet

*(time limit 60 minutes)*

**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 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:**

To request the relevant officers to produce a budget report to explore how existing funding can be reprofiled to address the priorities set out in this motion and specifically addressing: environmental crime (including littering, dog fouling, fly-tipping and graffiti); frontline services (including drain clearance, road repairs, and park and green space maintenance) and delivering fair district funding.

The report will come back to the next council where the report can be considered and voted upon.

**Motion 2: Tackling Anti-social behaviour**

To be Moved by Councillor Hanlon

To be Seconded by Councillor Eyre

This Council notes with deep concern and rising anger the linked problems blighting Oldham residents' quality of life:

A. Masked and balaclava-clad youths on off-road motorbikes, high-powered e-bikes (including Surron-style machines) and similar vehicles terrorise our streets. They race at high speed on roads, pavements, parks and open spaces, weave recklessly through traffic and pedestrians, ride without lights in dark clothing, and vanish into estates. These vehicles fuel drug dealing, robbery, theft, criminal damage, intimidation and the exploitation of children. Fast speeding cars compound the danger—driven recklessly at excessive speeds through residential

roads and estates, creating noise, fear and risk. Residents feel unsafe and powerless. Many say “no one can catch them.” Despite GMP operations such as Operation Hurricane, both problems remain widespread and unacceptable.

B. Illegal and nuisance fireworks. Under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 it is a criminal offence to use fireworks between 11:00 pm and 7:00 am (except limited permitted nights). Throwing or setting off fireworks in streets or public places is also illegal. Repeated early-hours explosions rob residents of sleep, distress children, older people, those with sensory issues or PTSD, and terrify animals. Areas including Chadderton report being woken at 2:00–3:00 am and beyond. Previous promises of better checks and mapping have failed to stop the nuisance.

Effective action demands tight, structured cooperation between the Council and GMP.

**This Council believes:**

Oldham residents should not have to endure masked bike thugs, reckless speeding cars or illegal midnight fireworks as “just the way it is.” Existing powers under road traffic law, the Fireworks Regulations, the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, statutory nuisance rules, licensing and tenancy enforcement must be used systematically, robustly and visibly. Better multi-agency working, intelligence-led targeting, clear escalation and significantly increased visible patrols and presence are essential.

**This Council therefore resolves:**

Instruct the Chief Executive to write within 14 days to the Chief Constable of GMP demanding enhanced cooperation on masked bikes, speeding cars and illegal fireworks, and seeking a written joint working protocol covering intelligence sharing, hotspot identification, increased targeted patrols and presence, escalation and regular performance reporting—agreed within three months.

Identify and regularly update hotspots for all three problems jointly with GMP, using resident reports, 101 calls and local intelligence. Maintain and review a current hotspot map at least quarterly.

Demand significantly increased intelligence-led targeted patrols and high-visibility presence by GMP (supported by Council officers where possible) in hotspots at peak risk times—more frequent, sustained and visible to deter offenders and reassure residents.

Ensure every relevant Council complaint is shared promptly with GMP and reinforce clear single points of contact so patterns of offending are spotted and acted on.

Establish a clear escalation process: joint case conferences and the full stepped use of warnings, Community Protection Notices, Public Spaces Protection

Orders, licensing action, vehicle seizures, prosecutions, tenancy enforcement and all ASB powers.

Demand that anti-social and criminal use of off-road bikes, e-bikes and fast speeding cars be made a GMP force priority, with dedicated resources, specialist bike units, roads policing, drones, aerial support and maximum use of section 59 warnings and seizures.

Write within 14 days to the Home Secretary, Policing Minister and Mayor of Greater Manchester demanding extra dedicated funding for GMP and a review of laws to strengthen powers against masked riders and reckless speeding.

Launch within 28 days a high-profile, borough-wide public campaign stating zero tolerance, explaining how to report (including anonymously), seeking intelligence on storage locations, and publicising enforcement successes—running for at least 12 months.

Write immediately to all major housing providers in Oldham requiring them to treat storage or use of vehicles linked to ASB or crime as a serious tenancy breach, share intelligence, take robust enforcement (including possession where appropriate) and report back within three months.

On illegal fireworks specifically:

Share all fireworks complaints promptly with GMP.

Urge residents to report illegal use (after 11 pm) to GMP on 101 or online as it happens, and persistent nuisance to Environmental Health.

Deploy the full toolkit against persistent offenders: warnings, CPNs, PSPOs, licensing reviews, seizures, prosecutions and ASB powers.

Scrutiny and prevention:

Require officers to report to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee (then quarterly, and to the Community Safety Partnership) with data by ward, seizures, warnings, arrests, prosecutions, hotspots, patrols conducted (including increased presence), progress on every resolution, and clear reduction targets within six and twelve months.

Strengthen prevention and diversion work with youth services, schools, children's services and Youth Justice while ensuring full use of powers against those who keep offending.

Report overall progress to full Council (or appropriate scrutiny) within six months and regularly thereafter.

This Council declares zero tolerance for masked youths on illegal bikes, dangerous speeding cars and illegal fireworks.

No excuses. No delay. No dilution. We will hold ourselves, GMP, housing

providers and partners to account until residents can live, sleep, walk, use parks and drive without fear or disturbance. The safety and quality of life of Oldham residents come first.

**Motion 3: Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss: Ensuring a Robust Masterplan**

To be Moved by Councillor Sharp

To be Seconded by Councillor Woodvine

**Council notes that:**

1. Places for Everyone (PfE) forms part of the statutory development plan for Oldham Council;
2. Policies JPA10 Beal Valley and JPA12 Broadbent Moss require development to be “*in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code as agreed by the local planning authority*”, including an infrastructure phasing and delivery strategy in accordance with Policy JP-D1;
3. Council previously resolved to formulate the Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document and undertook public consultation on the draft document earlier this year. However, changes to the national plan-making regulations mean that the final adoption date for new Supplementary Planning Documents was 30 June 2026, meaning that the masterplan cannot now be adopted as a new SPD and will remain non-statutory guidance;
4. The masterplan is intended to provide a comprehensive framework for development across both allocations, including the protection and enhancement of ecological habitats and green and blue infrastructure, and PfE requires development to avoid fragmenting or severing connectivity between habitats;
5. PfE identifies a new Metrolink stop and Park and Ride facility south of Cop Road as a “*necessary*” transport intervention for both JPA10 Beal Valley and JPA12 Broadbent Moss;
6. The Council’s Environmental Screening Opinion for the Phase 1 planning application at Broadbent Moss identifies the need for school-place provision to be addressed strategically across the wider allocated sites, together with a full assessment of the requirements for health-service provision;
7. Policy JP-D1 requires an infrastructure phasing and delivery strategy for sites where development will be delivered by different developers or in phases, setting out what needs to be provided, by when, and who will fund and deliver it.

**Council believes that:**

The Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss masterplan should be sufficiently comprehensive, evidenced and deliverable to provide the framework required by Policies JPA10 and JPA12, including demonstrating that the cumulative environmental, infrastructure, education, health and transport impacts of development have been properly assessed and planned for, and that further work is required before it can fulfil that role effectively.

**Council resolves that:**

1. The relevant officer ask if the developer consortium would be willing, as part of their ecological assessments supporting their planning applications, to update the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal underpinning their section of the proposed spine road to reflect the revised route and assess its implications for habitats, protected species and ecological connectivity, with the findings reported to the Council as part of the planning applications;
2. An assessment of projected school-place requirements across the Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss masterplan area to 2039 be undertaken, taking account of the cumulative impact of development across both allocations, and reported to Council, including an assessment of whether land should be safeguarded for a primary school;
3. A Health Impact Assessment for the Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss masterplan area be undertaken and reported to Council, assessing the cumulative impact of the proposed development on local health services and associated infrastructure;
4. The existing infrastructure phasing and delivery strategy within the masterplan be reviewed and strengthened in accordance with Policy JP-D1, clearly identifying what infrastructure is required, when it is required, the trigger points for delivery, and who will fund and deliver each element, with the revised strategy reported to Council;
5. A report be requested from Transport for Greater Manchester setting out the current status and deliverability of the proposed Metrolink stop and Park and Ride facility south of Cop Road, including:
  - the necessary stages for progressing the proposal and what each stage entails;
  - TfGM's current prospective timetable for those stages; and
  - the findings of any geotechnical assessments undertaken in relation to the Cop Road site, including any implications arising from the 2024 landslide affecting the Shaw-Derker line.

**Motion 4: Strengthening Controls on the Sale and Use of Fireworks**

To be Moved by Councillor Brownridge

To be Seconded by Councillor M. Ali

This Council has repeatedly highlighted the serious impact that the anti-social use of fireworks has on residents, animals, emergency services and local communities. Despite existing restrictions on the sale and use of fireworks, complaints continue throughout the year. Enforcement remains difficult because proving who has actually discharged a firework is often challenging, even when anti-social use is clearly taking place.

Whilst fireworks can be enjoyed safely as part of properly organised celebrations and community events, the current regulatory framework is no longer fit for purpose. The growth of online sales and the widespread availability of fireworks throughout the year has made it increasingly difficult for enforcement agencies to

prevent misuse.

This Council believes that a more robust permitting and accountability system is required.

Fireworks intended for private use should only be available in connection with approved events, with clear responsibility placed upon those obtaining the fireworks and organising their use.

**This Council notes:**

- Anti-social use of fireworks continues to generate significant complaints from residents across Oldham.
- Fireworks can cause distress to vulnerable residents, including those with sensory sensitivities, veterans suffering from PTSD, young children, and pet owners.
- Current legislation places significant limitations on enforcement because agencies often need to identify the individual who discharged a firework before action can be taken.
- Greater accountability for the purchase, possession and use of fireworks would strengthen enforcement and improve public safety.
- Local authorities currently have limited powers to regulate fireworks beyond existing national legislation.

**This Council further notes:**

- That the Government has launched a UK-wide consultation entitled "*Fireworks and Pyrotechnics in the UK*", published on 16 July 2026, which specifically seeks views on reforms to fireworks legislation aimed at addressing noise nuisance, anti-social behaviour, public safety concerns and the impact of fireworks on vulnerable people and animals. The consultation acknowledges growing public concern regarding the misuse of fireworks and recognises the need to consider stronger regulatory controls whilst maintaining the ability for communities to celebrate safely and responsibly

**This Council resolves to:**

1. Request that the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State urging the Government to introduce legislation that would:
  - a. Restrict the sale of fireworks solely to named individuals acting under a permit issued for a specific event.
  - b. Make possession of fireworks without a valid permit an offence, subject to appropriate exemptions for licensed retailers and professional operators.
  - c. Place legal responsibility upon the named permit holder or

holders for compliance with permit conditions, regardless of who physically discharges the fireworks.

- d. Strengthen enforcement powers available to police and local authorities.
2. Request that the Chief Executive of the Council write to the Mayor of Greater Manchester seeking support from all Greater Manchester local authorities for a coordinated campaign calling for reform of national fireworks legislation.
3. Request that the Mayor of Greater Manchester be encouraged to work with other combined authority mayors and regional leaders to build wider support for changes to the law.
4. Request that the Monitoring Officer investigate whether any existing by-law, Public Spaces Protection Order, licensing power or other local mechanism could be utilised to introduce stronger controls on the possession and use of fireworks within Oldham, and report findings to the appropriate committee.
5. Submit a formal response to the Government's consultation on *Fireworks and Pyrotechnics in the UK*, supporting stronger controls on the sale, possession and use of fireworks, including consideration of a permit-based system restricting sales to named individuals for authorised events only.
6. Continue to support measures aimed at reducing noise nuisance, improving public notification of organised displays and protecting vulnerable residents and animals from the harmful effects of anti-social firework use.
7. For all group leaders to engage with their counterparts in other authorities to ensure that this proposal has genuine cross party support nationwide.

**Motion 5: A Borough-Wide Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty and Improve Life Chances for Children in Oldham**

To be Moved by Councillor Z. Ali

To be Seconded by Councillor Arstan

This motion seeks a practical, measurable and cross-party programme for reducing child poverty in

Oldham, building on work already undertaken by the Council and learning from effective approaches elsewhere.

This Council notes that:

- Child poverty and deprivation continue to affect too many children and families across Oldham, with particularly severe pressures in some of the borough's most deprived communities.
- Oldham Council already provides important support through financial assistance, Family Hubs, early help, food and holiday support, housing and welfare advice, and employment and skills programmes.

The Council's existing work provides a strong foundation on which to build.

- In 2024, Oldham Council resolved to support the development of a national

Child Poverty Strategy and to explore further support for families affected by the two child limit, including through free school meals.

- Oldham Council's current support includes more than £5.7 million of financial-crisis support for 2026/27, including assistance for families and around 21,000 children eligible for Free School Meals during school holidays.
  - Oldham's Children and Young People Scrutiny Board has recognised the importance of intervention rather than waiting for crisis, and has discussed poverty, Family First, breakfast clubs and the expected impact of changes to the two-child benefit cap.
  - Local government cannot eliminate child poverty alone. However, the Council can use its convening power, services, partnerships, procurement, data, community networks and political voice to reduce the impact of poverty and improve children's life chances.
  - Approaches to tackling child poverty have been developed by councils elsewhere in England.
- Oldham should learn from proven practice while developing a strategy specifically suited to the borough's communities and circumstances.

This Council believes that:

- No child should have their life chances determined by the income or circumstances of their family.
- Reducing child poverty should be treated as a long-term corporate priority, with clear outcomes, measurable targets and democratic accountability.
- Prevention and early intervention are more effective than waiting until families reach crisis point.
- Children, parents, schools, health services, voluntary organisations, faith groups, businesses and communities should have a meaningful role in shaping solutions.
- Action should be focused particularly on communities experiencing the greatest levels of deprivation while ensuring that families across the borough can access support.
- A cross-party approach gives Oldham the best opportunity to maintain progress over successive administrations.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1 Develop an Oldham Child Poverty Reduction Strategy within 12 months, led by the Council and developed with partners, children, young people and families. The Strategy should establish a clear baseline, identify priority interventions and set measurable targets and timescales.

2 Establish a cross-party Child Poverty Partnership comprising councillors from across the political groups, relevant Council officers, schools and education leaders, health and public-health

partners, voluntary and community organisations, faith groups, local businesses, parents, children and young people. Its purpose should be to advise on, monitor and help deliver the Strategy.

3 Introduce an annual Child Poverty and Family Wellbeing Impact Statement alongside the Council's major budget and policy decisions, identifying where decisions may increase or reduce financial pressure on children and families and setting out appropriate mitigation where necessary.

4 Publish an annual Child Poverty Scorecard for Full Council, including progress against agreed indicators such as child poverty, free-school-meal eligibility, food insecurity, school attendance and attainment, access to early help, housing insecurity, employment and financial resilience, with data broken down where appropriate to identify inequalities between communities.

5 Prioritise early intervention and prevention, including strengthening the reach of Family Hubs, breakfast provision, holiday food and activity programmes, welfare and debt advice, housing support, employment and skills support, and routes into training and secure work.

6 Improve access to support by reviewing how residents are informed about available help and by developing a simple, coordinated communications approach across Council services and partner organisations, with particular attention to families who may not currently access support.

7 Work with schools and education partners to identify practical opportunities to reduce the effects of poverty on children's education, including access to free school meals, uniform and essential-cost support, attendance initiatives, enrichment and digital access.

8 Use the Council's convening and commissioning role to bring together public, voluntary, community, faith and business partners to identify additional resources, funding opportunities and practical initiatives that can reduce hardship and improve children's life chances.

9 Ask officers to identify external funding and best-practice opportunities and report to the relevant scrutiny body on potential initiatives that could be adapted for Oldham.

10 Write to Oldham's Members of Parliament and the Government's relevant Child Poverty Task Force setting out the scale of the challenge in Oldham, sharing local evidence and calling for national measures and funding that will help reduce child poverty.

11 Bring the completed Strategy and first-year implementation plan to Full Council for consideration and debate within 12 months, followed by an annual progress report.

Implementation and accountability.

The Strategy should complement, rather than duplicate, existing Council plans and statutory responsibilities. Before finalising the Strategy, officers should map current provision, identify gaps, establish a baseline and assess the resources required. Any new expenditure should be subject to the Council's normal financial, legal and equality-assessment processes.

A clear message from Oldham

Child poverty should not be accepted as inevitable. Oldham has communities with significant strengths, committed public services and a strong voluntary and community sector. This motion asks the Council to bring those assets together around a single, measurable ambition: to reduce child poverty, prevent families falling into crisis and give every child in Oldham the strongest possible start in life.

## 11 Changes to the Constitution (Pages 37 - 72)

Council is recommended to:

1. Approve the required constitutional amendments set out in Appendix 2 to give effect to the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 and related guidance.
2. Approve the amendments to the constitution set out in Appendix 2 regarding the exercise of executive functions in circumstances where there is no Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet Members in office, whereby in such circumstances, the Chief Executive may exercise executive functions under a specific constitutional delegation.

## 12 Interim Governance Report

Report to follow.

## 13 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: Annual Review of Complaints 2025/26 (Pages 73 - 84)

To note the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review of Complaints for 2025-26.

14 Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025/27 (Pages 85 - 102)

To consider and comment upon the Treasury Management Outturn report and the Treasury Management activity and outturn position.

15 Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Report to follow.

16 Ensuring Statutory Scrutiny and Enforceability for Places for Everyone Masterplans (Pages 103 - 108)

To note the contents of this report and that it will no longer be possible to adopt Supplementary Planning Documents for Masterplans for Places for Everyone allocations.

17 Oldham Children, Young People and Families Plan 2026/27 (Pages 109 - 118)

To approve the Oldham Children, Young People and Families Plan 2026-27

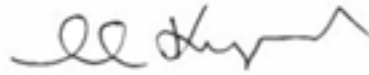
18 Youth Justice Plan 2026/27 (Pages 119 - 164)

To approve the Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan 2026-27.

19 Update on Actions from Council (Pages 165 - 180)

To update on actions from previous Council meetings.

**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, sweeping 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



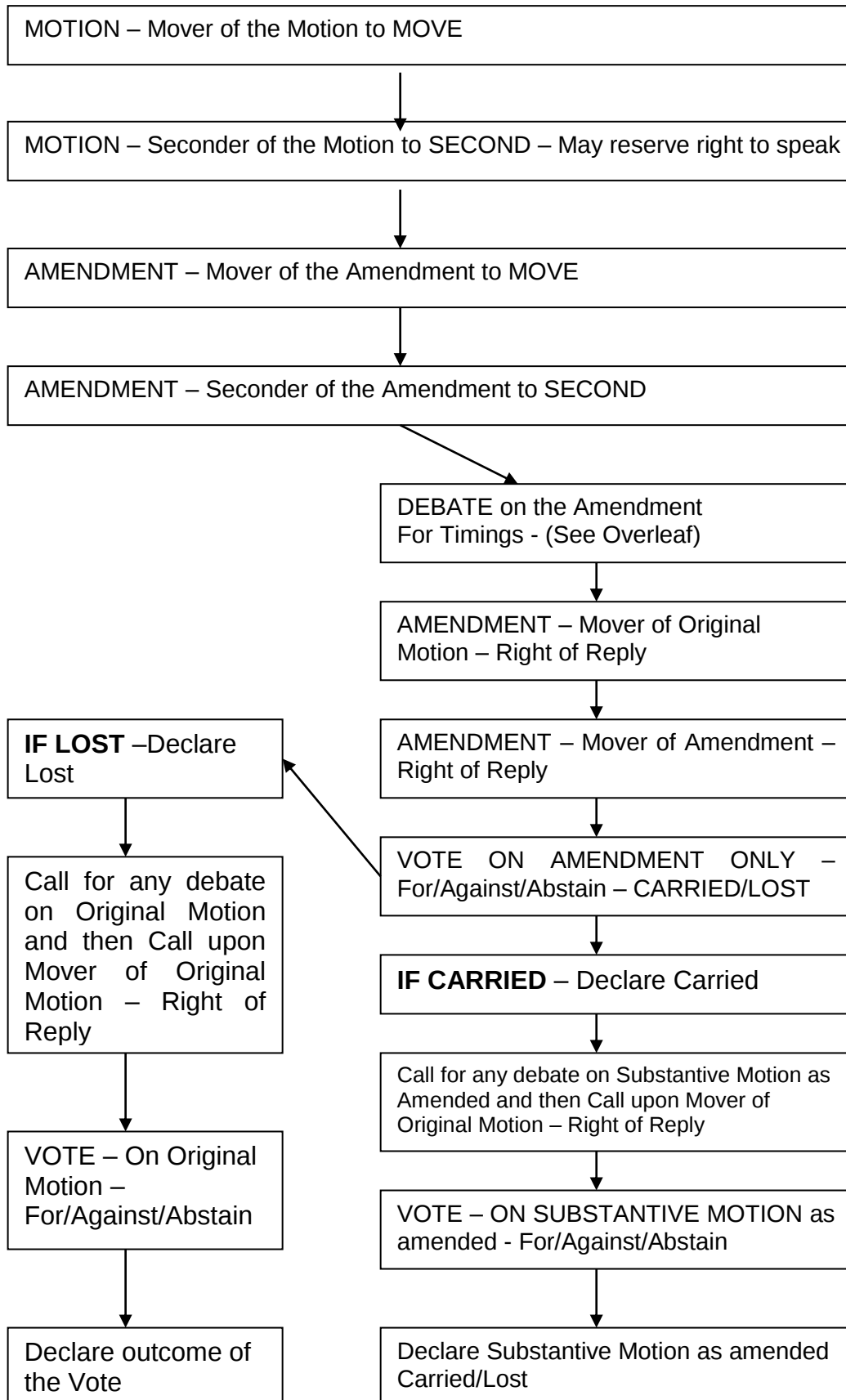
Declare outcome of the VOTE

### **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:** 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 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026 (adjourned to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026 and 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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.

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**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.
  - Expand and actively promote pre-loved and recycled uniform schemes.
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

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**Present:** The Mayor – Councillor Byrne (In the Chair)

Councillors Akhtar, Al-Hamdani, M Ali, Z Ali, Arstan, Aslam, Ball, Barnes, Bishop, Brooks, Brownridge, Charters, Chauhan, Eyre, Ford, Ghafoor, Hanlon, Harkness, Harrison, Hobin, F Hussain, J. Hussain, Sajed Hussain, Shabir Hussain, Islam, Jabbar, Jackson, Kenyon, Klonowski, Kouser, Moores, Murphy, Nasheen, Navesey, Quigg, Robinson, Ruthven, Shah, Sharp, Taleb, Tarbuck, E. Taylor, P. Taylor, Wilkinson, Williamson, Williams and Woodvine

**1                    TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Arnott, Azad, Chowhan, Hince, Hughes, Hurley, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Pinder, Rustidge, Sheldon and Shuttleworth.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3                    STATUTORY REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER  
UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND  
HOUSING ACT 1989 - FAILURE TO ELECT A COUNCIL  
LEADER AND FORM AN ADMINISTRATION**

The Council considered a statutory report of the Monitoring Officer which addressed the continuing inability of the Council to appoint a Leader and establish a functioning administration and highlighted that this outcome is unlawful.

The Mayor, Councillor Byrne MOVED and Councillor Al-Hamdani seconded that Council resolves into committee in line with council procedure rule 12.4.4.(o) to allow officers to address the meeting.

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

The Monitoring Officer and the Chief Executive addressed Council.

Councillors Shah, Quigg, Ghafoor, Al-Hamdani, Sharp, Williamson, E. Taylor, Chauhan, Byrne, Harkness, P. Taylor, Akhtar and Murphy addressed Council in relation to the report.

Councillor Woodvine MOVED and Councillor Chauhan seconded a closure motion.

On being put to the vote, the closure MOTION was carried.

RESOLVED:

That Council agreed to receive the report and note the Monitoring Officer's opinion.

4

## **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.

The Mayor, Councillor Byrne, MOVED and Councillor Ghafoor seconded a proposal to consider Amendment 7 first.

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

### **Amendment 7**

Councillor Hobin MOVED and Councillor Navesey seconded that Council suspend Council procedure rule 13.3

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

Councillor Hobin MOVED and Councillor Navesey seconded an amendment to Amendment 7, nominating Councillor Brian Hobin to be appointed as Leader of the Council.

Councillor P. Taylor spoke on the amendment.

Councillor Hobin exercised his right of reply.

On being put to the vote, AMENDMENT 7 was LOST.

### **Amendment 1**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor E. Taylor seconded an amendment that Councillor Shah be appointed Leader of the Council and the Labour Group form a minority administration.

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

### **Amendment 2**

Councillor Quigg MOVED and Councillor Paul Robinson seconded Amendment 2, that Councillor Lewis Quigg be appointed Leader of the Council.

Councillors P. Taylor, Kenyon, Eyre and Chauhan spoke on the amendment.

Councillor Quigg exercised his right of reply.

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

### **Amendment 3**

Councillor Barnes MOVED and Councillor Tarbuck seconded Amendment 3  
Councillors Sharp, Hobin, E. Taylor and Ghafoor spoke on the amendment.

Councillor Barnes MOVED and Councillor Chauhan seconded a closure motion.

On being put to the vote, the CLOSURE MOTION was CARRIED.

On being put to the vote, AMENDMENT 3 was LOST

Amendment 4  
Councillor Jackson MOVED and Councillor Ruthven seconded Amendment 4.  
Councillors Quigg, E. Taylor and Hobin spoke on the amendment.

Councillor Hobin MOVED and Councillor Chauhan seconded a closure motion.

On being put to the vote, the CLOSURE MOTION was CARRIED.

On being put to the vote, AMENDMENT 4 was LOST.

Amendment 5  
Councillor Kenyon MOVED and Councillor Al-Hamdani seconded Amendment 5.

Councillors P. Taylor, Hobin and E. Taylor spoke on the amendment.

Councillor Kenyon exercised his right of reply.

On being put to the vote, AMENDMENT 5 was LOST.

Amendment 6  
Councillor Ghafoor MOVED and Councillor Al-Hamdani seconded Amendment 6.

Councillors Hobin, E. Taylor, Shah and Barnes spoke on the amendment.

Councillor Ghafoor exercised his right of reply.

On being put to the vote, AMENDMENT 6 was LOST.

The Mayor, Councillor Byrne, outlined that as all amendments had been lost, the Monitoring Officer would write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.50 pm.





**Report to COUNCIL**

## **Petitions**

**Officer Contact:** Heather Moore, Assistant Director of Governance

**Report Author:** Jack Bailey, Constitutional Services

**Email:** jack.bailey@oldham.gov.uk

**16<sup>th</sup> September 2026**

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### **Reason for Decision**

To note the petitions received in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The item is for information only and no decision on the matters raised is being sought or taken by Council.

### **Recommendations**

That in line with the petitions protocol Council notes the petitions received in the Municipal Year 2025/26 and those received to date during 2026/2027 which received over the required 50 signatures.

**Petitions**

- 1 Council is required to note any petitions (excluding statutory petitions, such as planning). Full Council will debate a petition of more than 4,000 valid signatures. Valid signatures include anyone who lives, works or studies in Oldham.

**Petitions Received in the 2025/26 Municipal Year:**

| Reference Number | Title                                                                         | Date Received | Number of Signatures |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| * 2025-05        | Lower Frenches Drive - request for residents only parking                     | 27/08/25      | 52                   |
| h2025-06         | Reject OMBC and TFGM plans for Royton                                         | 09/12/25      | 147                  |
| s2026-01         | Implementation of a Residential Parking Permit Scheme – Sandringham Park Area | 12/05/26      | 111                  |
| p2026-02         | Install Speed Camera on Roundthorn Road                                       | 17/05/26      | 103                  |
| e 2026-03        | Prevent closure of Chadderton Hall Park by Mio Care*                          | 22/03/26      | 5,929†               |
| t 2026-04        | Petition for safety measures on Abbey Hills Road to improve road safety       | 19/01/26      | 70                   |

on was hosted on [Change.org](https://www.change.org) but the Council was formally notified of it by the Lead Petitioner so details have been included in this report for information only. † Correct as of 02/09/2026 but cannot be verified as Oldham residents.

**2 Petitions received in the 2026/2027 Municipal Year to date**

| Reference Number | Title                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Date Received | Number of Signatures |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| 2026-08          | Petition - Hollow Meadow Close – Royton<br><br>Request for review the design and safety of the entrance to Hollow Meadow Close from Broadway and for a review and removal of the “Left turn only” restriction at the exit of Hollow Meadow Close (onto Broadway) | 22/07/2026    | 52                   |

**3 Financial Implications**

- 3.1 None arising from this report.

**4 Legal Implications**

- 4.1 The report is for information only and is not seeking a decision. The reporting of petitions is consistent with the Council's Constitution and Petitions Protocol. Any legal implications that arise from the matters raised within individual petitions will be considered as part of any subsequent reports or decisions relating to those matters.

(Alex Bougatef -Director of Legal, Monitoring Officer)

**5. Procurement Implications**

- 5.1 None.

**6 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

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|      |                               |
|------|-------------------------------|
| 6.1  | No                            |
| 7    | <b>Key Decision</b>           |
| 7.1  | No                            |
| 8    | <b>Key Decision Reference</b> |
| 8.1  | N/A.                          |
| 9    | <b>Appendices</b>             |
| 9.1  | None                          |
| 10   | <b>Background Papers</b>      |
| 10.1 | None                          |

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## Notice of Motion for Full Council

Under Paragraph 12 of the Council Procedure Rules

The following Motion to be submitted to Council on the date indicated below:-

### **A new start for Oldham Borough**

#### **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 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:**

To request the relevant officers to produce a budget report to explore how existing funding can be reprofiled to address the priorities set out in this motion and specifically addressing: environmental crime (including littering, dog fouling, fly-tipping and graffiti); frontline services (including drain clearance, road repairs, and park and green space maintenance) and delivering fair district funding.

The report will come back to the next council where the report can be considered and voted upon.

Date of Council meeting: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2026

Notice submitted from (must be received no later than noon, seven working days before the meeting e.g. the Monday before the meeting on Wednesday)

Councillor Proposing: Garth Harkness

Councillor Seconding: Sam Al-Hamdani

On completion of the above please submit your motion to [constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk)

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# Notice of Motion for Full Council

## Under Paragraph 12 of the Council Procedure Rules



The following Motion to be submitted to Council on the date indicated below:-

This Council notes with deep concern and rising anger the linked problems blighting Oldham residents' quality of life:

A. Masked and balaclava-clad youths on off-road motorbikes, high-powered e-bikes (including Surron-style machines) and similar vehicles terrorise our streets. They race at high speed on roads, pavements, parks and open spaces, weave recklessly through traffic and pedestrians, ride without lights in dark clothing, and vanish into estates. These vehicles fuel drug dealing, robbery, theft, criminal damage, intimidation and the exploitation of children. Fast speeding cars compound the danger—driven recklessly at excessive speeds through residential roads and estates, creating noise, fear and risk. Residents feel unsafe and powerless. Many say “no one can catch them.” Despite GMP operations such as Operation Hurricane, both problems remain widespread and unacceptable.

B. Illegal and nuisance fireworks. Under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 it is a criminal offence to use fireworks between 11:00 pm and 7:00 am (except limited permitted nights). Throwing or setting off fireworks in streets or public places is also illegal. Repeated early-hours explosions rob residents of sleep, distress children, older people, those with sensory issues or PTSD, and terrify animals. Areas including Chadderton report being woken at 2:00–3:00 am and beyond. Previous promises of better checks and mapping have failed to stop the nuisance.

Effective action demands tight, structured cooperation between the Council and GMP.

This Council believes:

Oldham residents should not have to endure masked bike thugs, reckless speeding cars or illegal midnight fireworks as “just the way it is.”

Existing powers under road traffic law, the Fireworks Regulations, the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, statutory nuisance rules, licensing and tenancy enforcement must be used systematically, robustly and visibly. Better multi-agency working, intelligence-led targeting, clear escalation and significantly increased visible patrols and presence are essential.

This Council therefore resolves:

Instruct the Chief Executive to write within 14 days to the Chief Constable of GMP demanding enhanced cooperation on masked bikes, speeding cars and illegal fireworks, and seeking a written joint working protocol covering intelligence sharing, hotspot identification, increased targeted patrols and presence, escalation and regular performance reporting—agreed within three months.

Identify and regularly update hotspots for all three problems jointly with GMP, using resident reports, 101 calls and local intelligence. Maintain and review a current hotspot map at least quarterly.

Demand significantly increased intelligence-led targeted patrols and high-visibility presence by GMP (supported by Council officers where possible) in hotspots at peak risk times—more frequent, sustained and visible to deter offenders and reassure residents.

Ensure every relevant Council complaint is shared promptly with GMP and reinforce clear single points of contact so patterns of offending are spotted and acted on.

Establish a clear escalation process: joint case conferences and the full stepped use of warnings, Community Protection Notices, Public Spaces Protection Orders, licensing action, vehicle seizures, prosecutions, tenancy enforcement and all ASB powers.

Demand that anti-social and criminal use of off-road bikes, e-bikes and fast speeding cars be made a GMP force priority, with dedicated resources, specialist bike units, roads policing, drones, aerial support and maximum use of section 59 warnings and seizures.

Write within 14 days to the Home Secretary, Policing Minister and Mayor of Greater Manchester demanding extra dedicated funding for GMP and a review of laws to strengthen powers against masked riders and reckless speeding.

Launch within 28 days a high-profile, borough-wide public campaign stating zero tolerance, explaining how to report (including anonymously), seeking intelligence on storage locations, and publicising enforcement successes—running for at least 12 months.

Write immediately to all major housing providers in Oldham requiring them to treat storage or use of vehicles linked to ASB or crime as a serious tenancy breach, share intelligence, take robust enforcement (including possession where appropriate) and report back within three months.

On illegal fireworks specifically:

Share all fireworks complaints promptly with GMP.

Urge residents to report illegal use (after 11 pm) to GMP on 101 or online as it happens, and persistent nuisance to Environmental Health.

Deploy the full toolkit against persistent offenders: warnings, CPNs, PSPOs, licensing reviews, seizures, prosecutions and ASB powers.

Scrutiny and prevention:

Require officers to report to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee (then quarterly, and to the Community Safety Partnership) with data by ward, seizures, warnings, arrests, prosecutions, hotspots, patrols conducted (including increased presence), progress on every resolution, and clear reduction targets within six and twelve months.

Strengthen prevention and diversion work with youth services, schools, children's services and Youth Justice while ensuring full use of powers against those who keep offending.

Report overall progress to full Council (or appropriate scrutiny) within six months and regularly thereafter.

This Council declares zero tolerance for masked youths on illegal bikes, dangerous speeding cars and illegal fireworks.

No excuses. No delay. No dilution. We will hold ourselves, GMP, housing providers and partners to account until residents can live, sleep, walk, use parks and drive without fear or disturbance. The safety and quality of life of Oldham residents come first.

Date of Council meeting:

16/09/2026

Notice submitted from (must be received no later than noon, seven working days before the meeting e.g. the Monday before the meeting on Wednesday)

The submission must be signed by at least one Member

Councillor Proposing: Peter Hanlon

Signature: *Peter Hanlon*

Councillor Seconding: Stephen Eyre

Signature: *Stephen Eyre*

On completion of the above please submit your motion to [constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk)

# Notice of Motion for Full Council

## Under Paragraph 12 of the Council Procedure Rules



The following Motion to be submitted to Council on the date indicated below:-

### **Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss: Ensuring a Robust Masterplan**

Council notes that:

1. Places for Everyone (PfE) forms part of the statutory development plan for Oldham Council;
2. Policies JPA10 Beal Valley and JPA12 Broadbent Moss require development to be “*in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code as agreed by the local planning authority*”, including an infrastructure phasing and delivery strategy in accordance with Policy JP-D1;
3. Council previously resolved to formulate the Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document and undertook public consultation on the draft document earlier this year. However, changes to the national plan-making regulations mean that the final adoption date for new Supplementary Planning Documents was 30 June 2026, meaning that the masterplan cannot now be adopted as a new SPD and will remain non-statutory guidance;
4. The masterplan is intended to provide a comprehensive framework for development across both allocations, including the protection and enhancement of ecological habitats and green and blue infrastructure, and PfE requires development to avoid fragmenting or severing connectivity between habitats;
5. PfE identifies a new Metrolink stop and Park and Ride facility south of Cop Road as a “*necessary*” transport intervention for both JPA10 Beal Valley and JPA12 Broadbent Moss;
6. The Council’s Environmental Screening Opinion for the Phase 1 planning application at Broadbent Moss identifies the need for school-place provision to be addressed strategically across the wider allocated sites, together with a full assessment of the requirements for health-service provision;
7. Policy JP-D1 requires an infrastructure phasing and delivery strategy for sites where development will be delivered by different developers or in phases, setting out what needs to be provided, by when, and who will fund and deliver it.

Council believes that:

The Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss masterplan should be sufficiently comprehensive, evidenced and deliverable to provide the framework required by Policies JPA10 and JPA12, including demonstrating that the cumulative environmental, infrastructure, education, health and transport impacts of development have been properly assessed and planned for, and that further work is required before it can fulfil that role effectively.

Council resolves that:

1. The relevant officer ask if the developer consortium would be willing, as part of their ecological assessments supporting their planning applications, to update the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal underpinning their section of the proposed spine road to reflect the revised route and assess its implications for habitats, protected species and ecological connectivity, with the findings reported to the Council as part of the planning applications;

2. An assessment of projected school-place requirements across the Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss masterplan area to 2039 be undertaken, taking account of the cumulative impact of development across both allocations, and reported to Council, including an assessment of whether land should be safeguarded for a primary school;
3. A Health Impact Assessment for the Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss masterplan area be undertaken and reported to Council, assessing the cumulative impact of the proposed development on local health services and associated infrastructure;
4. The existing infrastructure phasing and delivery strategy within the masterplan be reviewed and strengthened in accordance with Policy JP-D1, clearly identifying what infrastructure is required, when it is required, the trigger points for delivery, and who will fund and deliver each element, with the revised strategy reported to Council;
5. A report be requested from Transport for Greater Manchester setting out the current status and deliverability of the proposed Metrolink stop and Park and Ride facility south of Cop Road, including:
  - the necessary stages for progressing the proposal and what each stage entails;
  - TfGM's current prospective timetable for those stages; and
  - the findings of any geotechnical assessments undertaken in relation to the Cop Road site, including any implications arising from the 2024 landslide affecting the Shaw-Derker line.

Date of Council meeting: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2026

Notice submitted from (must be received no later than noon, seven working days before the meeting e.g. the Monday before the meeting on Wednesday)

The submission must be signed by at least one Member

Councillor Proposing: Beth Sharp

Signature:

Councillor Seconding: Max Woodvine

Signature:

On completion of the above please submit your motion to [constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk)

# Notice of Motion for Full Council

## Under Paragraph 12 of the Council Procedure Rules



The following Motion to be submitted to Council on the date indicated below:-

### **Strengthening Controls on the Sale and Use of Fireworks**

This Council has repeatedly highlighted the serious impact that the anti-social use of fireworks has on residents, animals, emergency services and local communities. Despite existing restrictions on the sale and use of fireworks, complaints continue throughout the year. Enforcement remains difficult because proving who has actually discharged a firework is often challenging, even when anti-social use is clearly taking place.

Whilst fireworks can be enjoyed safely as part of properly organised celebrations and community events, the current regulatory framework is no longer fit for purpose. The growth of online sales and the widespread availability of fireworks throughout the year has made it increasingly difficult for enforcement agencies to prevent misuse.

This Council believes that a more robust permitting and accountability system is required.

Fireworks intended for private use should only be available in connection with approved events, with clear responsibility placed upon those obtaining the fireworks and organising their use.

#### **This Council notes:**

- Anti-social use of fireworks continues to generate significant complaints from residents across Oldham.
- Fireworks can cause distress to vulnerable residents, including those with sensory sensitivities, veterans suffering from PTSD, young children, and pet owners.
- Current legislation places significant limitations on enforcement because agencies often need to identify the individual who discharged a firework before action can be taken.
- Greater accountability for the purchase, possession and use of fireworks would strengthen enforcement and improve public safety.
- Local authorities currently have limited powers to regulate fireworks beyond existing national legislation.

#### **This Council further notes:**

- That the Government has launched a UK-wide consultation entitled "*Fireworks and Pyrotechnics in the UK*", published on 16 July 2026, which specifically seeks views on reforms to fireworks legislation aimed at addressing noise nuisance, anti-social behaviour, public safety concerns and the impact of fireworks on vulnerable people and animals. The consultation acknowledges growing public concern regarding the misuse of fireworks and recognises the need to consider stronger regulatory controls whilst maintaining the ability for communities to celebrate safely and responsibly

**This Council resolves to:**

1. Request that the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State urging the Government to introduce legislation that would:
  - a. Restrict the sale of fireworks solely to named individuals acting under a permit issued for a specific event.
  - b. Make possession of fireworks without a valid permit an offence, subject to appropriate exemptions for licensed retailers and professional operators.
  - c. Place legal responsibility upon the named permit holder or holders for compliance with permit conditions, regardless of who physically discharges the fireworks.
  - d. Strengthen enforcement powers available to police and local authorities.
2. Request that the Chief Executive of the Council write to the Mayor of Greater Manchester seeking support from all Greater Manchester local authorities for a coordinated campaign calling for reform of national fireworks legislation.
3. Request that the Mayor of Greater Manchester be encouraged to work with other combined authority mayors and regional leaders to build wider support for changes to the law.
4. Request that the Monitoring Officer investigate whether any existing by-law, Public Spaces Protection Order, licensing power or other local mechanism could be utilised to introduce stronger controls on the possession and use of fireworks within Oldham, and report findings to the appropriate committee.
5. Submit a formal response to the Government's consultation on *Fireworks and Pyrotechnics in the UK*, supporting stronger controls on the sale, possession and use of fireworks, including consideration of a permit-based system restricting sales to named individuals for authorised events only.
6. Continue to support measures aimed at reducing noise nuisance, improving public notification of organised displays and protecting vulnerable residents and animals from the harmful effects of anti-social firework use.
7. For all group leaders to engage with their counterparts in other authorities to ensure that this proposal has genuine cross party support nationwide.

Date of Council meeting: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2026

Notice submitted from (must be received no later than noon, seven working days before the meeting e.g. the Monday before the meeting on Wednesday)

The submission must be signed by at least one Member

Councillor Proposing: Barbara Brownridge

Signature: B.Brownridge

Councillor Seconding: Mohon Ali

Signature:

On completion of the above please submit your motion to [constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk)

# Notice of Motion for Full Council

## Under Paragraph 12 of the Council Procedure Rules

The following Motion to be submitted to Council on the date indicated below:-

### **A Borough-Wide Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty and Improve Life Chances for Children in Oldham**

This motion seeks a practical, measurable and cross-party programme for reducing child poverty in Oldham, building on work already undertaken by the Council and learning from effective approaches elsewhere.

This Council notes that:

- Child poverty and deprivation continue to affect too many children and families across Oldham, with particularly severe pressures in some of the borough's most deprived communities.
- Oldham Council already provides important support through financial assistance, Family Hubs, early help, food and holiday support, housing and welfare advice, and employment and skills programmes.

The Council's existing work provides a strong foundation on which to build.

- In 2024, Oldham Council resolved to support the development of a national Child Poverty Strategy and to explore further support for families affected by the two child limit, including through free school meals.
- Oldham Council's current support includes more than £5.7 million of financial-crisis support for 2026/27, including assistance for families and around 21,000 children eligible for Free School Meals during school holidays.
- Oldham's Children and Young People Scrutiny Board has recognised the importance of intervention rather than waiting for crisis, and has discussed poverty, Family First, breakfast clubs and the expected impact of changes to the two-child benefit cap.
- Local government cannot eliminate child poverty alone. However, the Council can use its convening power, services, partnerships, procurement, data, community networks and political voice to reduce the impact of poverty and improve children's life chances.
- Approaches to tackling child poverty have been developed by councils elsewhere in England. Oldham should learn from proven practice while developing a strategy specifically suited to the borough's communities and circumstances.

This Council believes that:

- No child should have their life chances determined by the income or circumstances of their family.
- Reducing child poverty should be treated as a long-term corporate priority, with clear outcomes, measurable targets and democratic accountability.
- Prevention and early intervention are more effective than waiting until families reach crisis point.
- Children, parents, schools, health services, voluntary organisations, faith groups, businesses and communities should have a meaningful role in shaping solutions.
- Action should be focused particularly on communities experiencing the greatest levels of deprivation while ensuring that families across the borough can access support.
- A cross-party approach gives Oldham the best opportunity to maintain progress over successive administrations.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- 1 Develop an Oldham Child Poverty Reduction Strategy within 12 months, led by the Council

and developed with partners, children, young people and families. The Strategy should establish a clear baseline, identify priority interventions and set measurable targets and timescales.

2 Establish a cross-party Child Poverty Partnership comprising councillors from across the political groups, relevant Council officers, schools and education leaders, health and public-health partners, voluntary and community organisations, faith groups, local businesses, parents, children and young people. Its purpose should be to advise on, monitor and help deliver the Strategy.

3 Introduce an annual Child Poverty and Family Wellbeing Impact Statement alongside the Council's major budget and policy decisions, identifying where decisions may increase or reduce financial pressure on children and families and setting out appropriate mitigation where necessary.

4 Publish an annual Child Poverty Scorecard for Full Council, including progress against agreed indicators such as child poverty, free-school-meal eligibility, food insecurity, school attendance and attainment, access to early help, housing insecurity, employment and financial resilience, with data broken down where appropriate to identify inequalities between communities.

5 Prioritise early intervention and prevention, including strengthening the reach of Family Hubs, breakfast provision, holiday food and activity programmes, welfare and debt advice, housing support, employment and skills support, and routes into training and secure work.

6 Improve access to support by reviewing how residents are informed about available help and by developing a simple, coordinated communications approach across Council services and partner organisations, with particular attention to families who may not currently access support.

7 Work with schools and education partners to identify practical opportunities to reduce the effects of poverty on children's education, including access to free school meals, uniform and essential-cost support, attendance initiatives, enrichment and digital access.

8 Use the Council's convening and commissioning role to bring together public, voluntary, community, faith and business partners to identify additional resources, funding opportunities and practical initiatives that can reduce hardship and improve children's life chances.

9 Ask officers to identify external funding and best-practice opportunities and report to the relevant scrutiny body on potential initiatives that could be adapted for Oldham.

10 Write to Oldham's Members of Parliament and the Government's relevant Child Poverty Task Force setting out the scale of the challenge in Oldham, sharing local evidence and calling for national measures and funding that will help reduce child poverty.

11 Bring the completed Strategy and first-year implementation plan to Full Council for consideration and debate within 12 months, followed by an annual progress report.

#### Implementation and accountability.

The Strategy should complement, rather than duplicate, existing Council plans and statutory responsibilities. Before finalising the Strategy, officers should map current provision, identify gaps, establish a baseline and assess the resources required. Any new expenditure should be subject to the Council's normal financial, legal and equality-assessment processes.

#### A clear message from Oldham

Child poverty should not be accepted as inevitable. Oldham has communities with significant strengths, committed public services and a strong voluntary and community sector. This motion asks the Council to bring those assets together around a single, measurable ambition: to reduce

child poverty, prevent families falling into crisis and give every child in Oldham the strongest possible start in life.

Date of Council meeting: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2026

Notice submitted from (must be received no later than noon, seven working days before the meeting e.g. the Monday before the meeting on Wednesday)

The submission must be signed by at least one Member

Councillor Proposing: Zaheer Ali

Signature:

Councillor Seconding: Sonny Arstan

Signature:

On completion of the above please submit your motion to [constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk)

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**Report to COUNCIL**

## **Changes to the Constitution**

**Officer Contact:** Director of Legal (Monitoring Officer)

**Report Author:** Heather Moore, Assistant Director of Governance

**Email:** [heather.moore@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:heather.moore@oldham.gov.uk)

**16 September 2026**

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### **Reasons for Decision**

To ensure that the Council's Constitution remains compliant with recent national planning reforms introduced through the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026.

To provide constitutional clarity regarding the exercise of executive functions during periods where the Council does not have a Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet Members in office.

### **Recommendation**

Council is recommended to:

1. Approve the required constitutional amendments set out in Appendix 2 to give effect to the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 and related guidance.
2. Approve the amendments to the constitution set out in Appendix 2 regarding the exercise of executive functions in circumstances where there is no Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet Members in office, whereby in such circumstances, the Chief Executive may exercise executive functions under a specific constitutional delegation.

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## 1 Background

This report sets out proposed changes to the Constitution relating to planning decisions and executive decision making.

### 1.1 Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026

- 1.1.1 Local planning authorities can currently set their own schemes of delegation, directing the way a planning application is determined – either by officers under delegated authority or by Councillors sitting as the Planning Committee.
- 1.1.2 As part of its wider programme of planning reform, the Government is introducing a new National Scheme of Delegation for planning functions, alongside rules on the size of planning committees. Draft regulations were laid in Parliament in June, and the changes will come into force on 31 October 2026. Any decisions made on or after that date must be in line with the new regulations. Statutory Guidance has also been published to support implementation of these changes.
- 1.1.3 The Government's aim in introducing the reforms is to provide greater clarity and consistency regarding the role of planning committees in decision-making, ensuring that the committee's focus is on applications of strategic importance, while routine and technical decisions are determined by officers.
- 1.1.4 The National Scheme of Delegation identifies specific planning application types and groups them into two schedules:
- Those in Schedule 1 must be determined by officers under delegated powers and cannot go to Planning Committee.
  - Those in Schedule 2 should also be determined under delegated powers unless the Nominated Member and Nominated Officer consider that it needs to go to Planning Committee.
- 1.1.5 The National Scheme of Delegation also sets out how to deal with 'Own-Interest Applications'. These are applications made by officers, councillors (members) or on behalf of the Council itself.
- 1.1.6 The Regulations make provision for the Council to identify a Nominated Member and a Nominated Officer, as well as substitutes, to discharge the relevant parts of the Regulations.
- 1.1.7 The statutory guidance states that the Nominated Member "should be the Chair of the Planning Committee" and that the Nominated Officer "should be the Chief Planning Officer or equivalent officer who has extensive professional planning experience" (for the Council this is the Assistant Director for Planning and Development). The proposed approach conforms with statutory guidance.

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- 1.1.8 The statutory guidance confirms that “Where a planning function is not listed in either Schedule 1 or 2, it is for the Local Planning Authority to decide whether it should be delegated to an officer or referred to a committee or sub-committee for a decision (as part of its local constitution)”. Details of Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 can be found in the link to the legislation referred to in the background papers section of this report.
- 1.1.9 The “overriding presumption” should be that applications are determined by officers and determined by committee as an exception. This is in line with the approach under the current local scheme of delegation.
- 1.1.10 In making that decision the Nominated Member and Nominated Officer must apply the criteria in Regulation 5, known as the Gateway Test. It is for individual local planning authorities to decide whether the application passes the test and be determined by their Planning Committee or not.
- 1.1.11 The Gateway Test is whether the application raises:
- (a) one or more issues of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area; or
  - (b) one or more significant planning matters having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations.
- 1.1.12 The guidance also states that “As a minimum, the local planning authority should keep a record of the cases the Nominated Officer and Nominated Member have considered for referral to committee, the outcome of their consideration and the reasons for their decision. They should report this to the planning committee on a regular basis and make it available on their website.”

## **1.2 Executive decision making**

- 1.2.1 The Council remains under a statutory duty to operate executive arrangements. All the executive functions of the Council are, by virtue of section 9E(2) of the Local Government Act 2000, vested in the Executive Leader who determines the allocation and discharge of executive functions in accordance with the Constitution. Oldham has been operating under the delegations of executive functions since the vacancy in the position of Leader arose in May 2026.
- 1.2.2 The Local Government Act 2000 states where the office of the Leader is vacant, the Deputy Leader can act in their place, and if the Deputy Leader is unable to act, the Executive (called the Cabinet in Oldham) or a member of the Executive can act in the Leader’s place. The absence of a Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet means the Council cannot operate in the manner envisaged by the Act.
- 1.2.3 The absence of an Executive Leader does not prevent officers from exercising powers that have been lawfully delegated to them under the Constitution, nor does it prevent statutory officers from carrying out their respective duties. Delegations have been exercised having regard to external legal advice and have enabled the Council to continue to discharge its statutory functions and responsibilities without interruption.

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- 1.2.4 The current position was not envisaged as a long-term governance arrangement. Whilst existing delegations have enabled business continuity and lawful decision-making, there is merit in providing greater constitutional certainty should the situation continue for an extended period.
- 1.2.5 The Constitution authorises the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions (in consultation with the Leader or, in the absence of the Leader, the Deputy Leader) which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet Meeting. In the interim, the Chief Executive has consulted all political group leaders, through a fortnightly cross-party consultative group of all group leaders and deputy leaders. The focus during the absence of a Leader has been to ensure continuity of essential services, with only the necessary decisions being taken to:
- Maintain service delivery;
  - Protect vulnerable residents;
  - Meet statutory obligations;
  - Ensure financial stability;
  - Maintain regulatory compliance; and
  - Fulfil legal or contractual obligations.
- 1.2.6 There has been statutory officer oversight of all key and principal decisions, which have been subject to enhanced legal and finance review by the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer or their deputies, and an emergency powers governance framework was established requiring all officers to set out the reasons why decisions could not be delayed, pending the election of a Leader. A separate report to Council details those decisions taken in consultation with political group leaders.

## **2. Changes to the Constitution**

### **2.1 Planning**

- 2.1.1 The proposed changes to the Council's Constitution are detailed in Appendix 1 of this report as tracked changes, with a clean copy of the applied changes in Appendix 2.
- 2.1.2 These changes reflect the fact that Schedule 1 applications will in future always be delegated to officers for a decision unless they are an "Own-Interest" application. Schedule 1 applications are essentially minor and householder planning applications. In comparison to the current Constitution, the primary difference for such Schedule 1 applications is that they cannot now be referred to Planning Committee for a decision if a ward councillor requests it, and the proposed changes to the Constitution therefore remove this procedure from Part 8 of the Constitution.
- 2.1.3 Examples of the types of Schedule 1 application that have been referred to Planning Committee in recent times under this procedure would include the change of use of a property to a HMO and minor applications that may have generated significant local interest and objection. These would have to remain as delegated officer decisions under the new 2026 Regulations.

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- 2.1.4 In considering Schedule 2 applications and which may be referred to Planning Committee for a decision, the guidance accompanying the new 2026 Regulations allows authorities to introduce a triage system into this process given it recognises that some larger and urban authorities would still receive a large number of Schedule 2 applications. The proposed changes to the Constitution include such a triage system for Oldham, reflecting the types of applications that under the current Constitution would normally be delegated to officers.
- 2.1.5 Such Schedule 2 applications that would have been delegated to officers under the current Constitution are therefore retained as delegated officer decisions under the proposed changes to the Constitution and would not be considered for referral to Planning Committee. This would include, for example, developments of 10-19 dwellings, which are classed as a “major” planning application, but which we do not take to Planning Committee for a decision under the current Constitution.
- 2.1.6 Under the proposed changes to the Constitution, the remaining Schedule 2 applications will be determined by officers in line with the legislation, unless both the Nominated Officer and Nominated Member agree that:
- 1) The proposal raises one or more significant planning matters having regard to the Development Plan and any other material considerations;
  - 2) The proposal raises one or more issues of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area; or
  - 3) The application has been made by the Council itself or an officer or member of the Council or if, in the view of the Nominated Member and the Nominated Officer, the Council or any of its members or officers otherwise has an interest in the application.
- 2.1.7 The above “Gateway Test” therefore would capture all applications that would be decided by Planning Committee under the current Constitution but would first require the Nominated Officer and Nominated Member to consider whether those applications meet the above criteria before referring them to Planning Committee for a decision. This ensures that Planning Committee only consider applications that are truly significant in their potential impact on the borough.
- 2.1.8 A record will be kept of the cases the Nominated Officer and Nominated Member have considered for referral to the Planning Committee, the outcome of their consideration and the reasons for their decision. This will be reported to the Planning Committee on a regular basis and made available on the Council’s website.
- 2.1.9 Should the Nominated Officer and Nominated Member not agree whether the application passes the Gateway Test, the Government’s statutory guidance states that “Nominated Officers and Nominated Members should make every effort to reach agreement on which cases should be referred to committee. However, where agreement is not possible, the case must be determined by officers in accordance with regulation 5(2) or regulation 6(2)”.

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- 2.1.10 It is therefore critical to have a Chair of Planning Committee in place for this new referral process. Without one, there is no Nominated Member for the Nominated Officer to consult, and so all planning applications would need to remain as a delegated officer decision. Nominations for the roles of Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees are subject to a separate report on the agenda for Council.
- 2.1.11 In making the changes required by the new legislation, the report also seeks to update the Constitution re-affirming the requirement for annual training for members of the Planning Committee before they can sit on the committee, and the need for members of committee to make themselves available for the training on the date provided in the municipal calendar.

## **2.2 Executive decisions**

- 2.2.1 The Council's current governance arrangements have highlighted that the Constitution does not expressly address the circumstance in which there is simultaneously no Leader, Deputy Leader or appointed Cabinet Members. Whilst the Local Government Act 2000 provides for the Deputy Leader, the Cabinet or a Cabinet Member to act in place of the Leader where required, the legislation does not expressly provide for the position that has arisen in Oldham where all executive offices are vacant.
- 2.2.2 The proposed amendments are therefore intended to clarify, rather than fundamentally alter, the Council's existing governance arrangements. They expressly set out who may exercise executive functions in the exceptional circumstance that there is no Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet Members. This provides transparency for Members, officers, partners, regulators and the public regarding the Council's decision-making arrangements.
- 2.2.3 The proposed new Executive Procedure Rule 3.6 set out in Appendix 1 with tracked changes provides that, where there is no Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet Members, executive functions shall be exercised by the Chief Executive on an interim basis. This reflects the practical approach that has been adopted to date to ensure the continued discharge of executive functions and the effective operation of the Council.
- 2.2.4 In addition, the amendments to the Chief Executive's delegated powers are intended to remove ambiguity between executive and non-executive emergency powers. The revised wording confirms the Chief Executive's authority to take emergency decisions in relation to both non-executive and executive functions where decisions cannot reasonably await the next meeting of the relevant decision-making body. These provisions support organisational resilience and ensure that the Council can continue to respond effectively to urgent issues, emergencies and statutory requirements regardless of the status of executive appointments.

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- 2.2.5 Importantly, the amendments do not remove the Council's obligation to appoint a Leader at the earliest opportunity, nor do they seek to establish a permanent alternative to the Leader and Cabinet model. Rather, they provide a clear constitutional framework to govern the interim period, ensure continuity of lawful decision-making, and reflect the arrangements that have operated successfully under legal advice since May 2026. The Chief Executive will continue to operate the current arrangements whereby there is structured and ongoing engagement with Group Leaders to consult them before decisions are made.
- 2.2.6 The amendments are therefore proposed in the interests of good governance, transparency and business continuity, ensuring that the Constitution accurately reflects the Council's decision-making arrangements in circumstances which were not expressly contemplated when the current provisions were drafted.
- 3 Options/Alternatives**
- 3.1 Alternative ways of applying the National Scheme of Delegation are possible and have been considered by officers but were not recommended given that they did not align as closely with the well-established processes in Oldham.
- 3.2 In relation to executive decisions, the alternative option would be to make no constitutional changes and continue to rely upon the existing delegations and external legal advice obtained following the vacancy in the office of Leader, but this is not recommended.
- 4 Preferred Option**
- 4.1 To agree the changes to the Constitution which are proposed in this report in Appendix 2.
- 5 Consultation**
- 5.1 The planning regulations are nationally prescribed and have been subject to consultation by central government.
- 6 Financial Implications**
- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
- 7 Legal Implications**
- 7.1 The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 require local planning authorities to implement the prescribed arrangements by 31 October 2026. The recommendations in this report are intended to support compliance with those Regulations, including the necessary amendments to the Constitution and associated governance processes. (A Evans)

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- 7.2 The Council remains under a statutory duty to operate executive arrangements under Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000. The current circumstance whereby there is no Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet is not expressly contemplated by either the Act or the Council's Constitution. The proposed constitutional amendments do not alter the Council's executive model but provide greater clarity regarding the exercise of executive functions during an interim period where executive offices are vacant.
8. **Procurement Implications**
- 8.1 N/A
- 9 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**
- 9.1 No
- 10 **Key Decision**
- 10.1 No
- 11 **Key Decision Reference**
- 11.1 N/A
- 12 **Background Papers**
- 12.1 [The Town and Country Planning \(Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions\) \(England\) Regulations 2026 - which includes Schedules 1 and 2 referred to in the report](#)
- [Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions: Guidance for local planning authorities in England](#)
- [Planning committee reform: statutory consultation on draft regulations and guidance – government response](#)
- [Oldham Council Constitution](#)
- 13 **Appendices**
- 13.1 Appendix 1 - Tracked changes to extracts of the Constitution  
Appendix 2 - Clean copy of the Constitution with changes applied

## **Appendix 1: Tracked changes of the Constitution**

### **Extract of the Council Constitution Part 3 Responsibility for Functions**

#### **4.2. Planning Committee**

- 4.2.1 The Planning Committee will undertake Council (or 'non-executive') functions as defined in Part A of Schedule 1 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations 2000 (as amended) where planning applications are referred to the committee in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 ("the 2026 Regulations").
- 4.2.2 For the purposes of fulfilling the 2026 Regulations, the nominated officer will be the Assistant Director for Planning and Development or, in their absence, the Director of Growth. The nominated member will be the Chair of Planning Committee or, in their absence, the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.
- 4.2.3 In accordance with the 2026 Regulations, all planning applications would initially be delegated to officers for a decision.
- 4.2.4 As per Regulation 6, "own-interest" applications may be referred to the Planning Committee for a decision where the nominated officer and nominated member agree. An "own-interest" application is one where:
- a) the application is made (whether or not jointly with any other person) by or on behalf of:
    - i. the authority,
    - ii. a member of the authority, or
    - iii. an officer of the authority, or
  - b) in the view of the nominated member and the nominated officer, the authority or any of its members or officers otherwise has an interest in the application.
- 4.2.5 In line with Regulation 5, applications that fall within Schedule 2 may also be referred to the Planning Committee for a decision, but only where the nominated officer and nominated member both agree that:
- 1) the proposal raises one or more significant planning matters having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations;
  - 2) the proposal raises one or more issues of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area; or
  - 3) the application has been made by the authority itself or an officer or member of the authority or an entity owned or controlled (whether wholly or partly) by that authority or any of its members or officers.
- 4.2.6 Where agreement cannot be reached by the nominated member and nominated officer, the application is to be determined by officers.

- 4.2.7 In accordance with Regulation 4, all applications that fall within Schedule 1 of the Regulations must be determined by an officer of the authority unless they are referred as an “own-interest” application under Regulation 6,
- 4.2.8 A record will be kept of the cases the nominated officer and nominated member have considered for referral to the Planning Committee, the outcome of their consideration and the reasons for their decision. This will be reported to the Planning Committee on a regular basis and made available on the council’s website.
- 4.2.9 Given the number of applications in the Oldham borough that fall within Schedule 2 and the number of officers employed by the council whose role has no connection to the local planning authority functions, the type of applications to be considered for referral will only include:
- a) Applications for minerals or waste development that fall within Schedule 2;
  - b) Applications involving the provision of:
    - i. 20 or more dwellings; or
    - ii. Residential development on a site area of 1 hectare or more;
  - c) Applications for the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1000 square metres or more;
  - d) Applications for retail, commercial, industrial or other development on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more;
  - e) Applications which require an environmental statement;
  - f) Applications that fall within Schedule 2 which are notifiable departures from the Council’s Development Plan;
  - g) Applications (within Schedules 1 and 2) submitted by a Councillor, senior Council Officer (Officers on senior manager pay grade and above) or a member of staff employed within the Planning and Development service area, or by an immediate family member or partner of these persons;
  - h) Applications (that fall under Schedule 2) to remove or vary conditions where the relevant planning condition was agreed by the Planning Committee in addition to those recommended in the Officer’s report; and
  - i) Applications for Listed Building Consent where a connected planning application for the development concerned falls under categories (a) to (h) above.

On related matters, the following may also be considered by the Planning Committee:

- j) Consultations from adjoining local authorities, including the Peak District National Park Authority, which fall into the categories (a) to (f) above, where officers recommend that the Council should raise an objection is raised to the proposed development; and
- k) The nomination of a Member of the Planning Committee to represent the Council at any subsequent hearing or inquiry where the decision of the Committee was made contrary to Officer advice.

## Extract of the Council Constitution Part 8 – Planning Committee Participation Protocols

### Protocol for Planning Committee meetings

#### 1. Referral procedure for planning applications to Planning Committee

- 1.1 In accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026, all planning applications would initially be delegated to officers for a decision. The same regulations allow some applications to be referred to the Planning Committee for a decision by agreement of a nominated officer and a nominated member in certain circumstances. Part 3, section 4.2 of the Council's Constitution establishes that the nominated officer will be the Assistant Director for Planning and Development or, in their absence, the Director of Growth. The nominated member will be the Chair of the Planning Committee or, in their absence, the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.
- 1.2 As planning applications are validated by the local planning authority, they appear on a weekly list which is distributed to all members and various other organisations and interested parties. Within the weekly list, applications that fall within the list (a) – (i) set out at Part 3, section 4.2 of the Constitution will be highlighted, and the nominated officer will contact the nominated member, making their recommendation as to whether the applications should be referred to the Planning Committee or not. The nominated officer and nominated member will discuss the merits of those highlighted applications and agree whether to refer the applications to the Planning Committee or not.
- 1.3 In accordance with the regulations, the referral of an application to committee must meet one of the following criteria:
- 1) the proposal raises one or more significant planning matters having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations;
  - 2) the proposal raises one or more issues of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area; or
  - 3) the application has been made by the authority itself or an officer or member of the authority or an entity owned or controlled (whether wholly or partly) by that authority or any of its members or officers.
- 1.4 A record will be kept of the cases the nominated officer and nominated member have considered for referral to the Planning Committee, the outcome of their consideration and the reasons for their decision. This will be reported to the Planning Committee on a regular basis and made available on the council's website.

- 1.5 Under the 2026 Regulations, there is no longer an opportunity for Ward Councillors to request that a specific planning application be referred to Planning Committee. However, Ward Councillors may request to speak on an application that is referred to Planning Committee. They may only do so where the application is within their ward and should contact Constitutional Services once the application is on a published agenda for Planning Committee.

## **2. Procedure for considering planning applications at Planning Committee**

- 2.1 The Committee agenda will include a report on each application which sets out all material considerations and the Officer's recommendation. Members of the Committee are, therefore, already aware of the relevant issues for any application at a Committee meeting.
- 2.2 The Planning Officer will introduce the report and a Supplementary Late Information List will report any matters that have arisen since the publication of the report, for example, the receipt of further letters or proposed new / amended conditions.
- 2.3 The Chair will invite the objector or a representative of the objectors (if any) to speak. Members may ask questions of the objector or representative of the objectors to clarify any points that have been made.
- 2.4 The Chair will invite the applicant or a representative of the applicant to speak in support of the application and on issues raised by objectors. Members may ask the applicant or a representative of the applicant to clarify the proposals or their response to the objections.
- 2.5 Ward Councillors not on the Committee may speak on applications affecting their Ward at a meeting of the Planning Committee. Members may ask questions of the Ward Councillors to clarify any comments they have made.
- 2.6 The Planning or other Officers (as appropriate) will be invited to comment on issues raised by the speakers.
- 2.7 The Committee will then debate the issues and may ask questions of the Planning and other Officers and make a decision on the application (see below).
- 2.8 On occasions, an application may be deferred by Committee without debate of the issues, for example because further information is awaited. In such cases, speakers will not be permitted to address the Committee until the application is debated at a future meeting. Speakers will be notified of the date of the meeting which will determine the application. If the Committee defers an application after hearing from a speaker or speakers, for example to carry out a site visit, no speaker, apart from Ward Members, will be allowed to address the Committee at a subsequent meeting considering the application unless the application has been materially altered. Speakers will be notified in writing of the determination of the application.

- 2.9 Members of the public are not allowed to take part in the debate and may not question Members, Officers or applicants whilst the Committee is determining the application. No documents, photos or other material may be circulated by the applicant, objector or Ward Member (as appropriate) at the Committee meeting.
- 2.10 Anyone registered to speak on an application arriving after the application has been dealt with will not be allowed to speak on that application.

### **3. Decisions by Planning Committee**

3.1 Having regard to the fact that decisions on planning applications are made in the public arena, Members of Planning Committee should conduct their business in a fair and sensitive manner. The debate on a planning application should be confined to the planning merits, or otherwise, of a development proposal.

3.2 The following principles should be observed when planning applications are determined.

- i) a party whip should not be applied on a planning application ;
- ii) it is for Members as individuals to balance the proper planning considerations in order to reach their own judgement on a planning proposal on the basis of information before them;
- iii) it is wrong for a Member to vote on a planning application without coming to a properly balanced judgement on the basis of proper planning considerations.

3.3 The Council has a duty to process applications without undue delay. Applications should not be deferred as a delaying tactic or to put off making a decision because of the number of objectors at a meeting or because of uncertainty in the face of opposing parties being present at the meeting.

3.4 Decisions taken by Committee should be open and transparent in the sense that any fact or document which Committee takes into account in coming to a decision should be a matter of public record.

### **4. Consultation with Chair, Vice-Chair and Opposition Spokesperson of Planning Committee**

4.1 There will be occasions when the Planning Committee has considered an application but is not able to issue a final decision because all statutory obligations have not been fulfilled. It is anticipated that referrals of this kind will be used infrequently.

4.2 In these cases, and at the Committee's discretion, the decision may be delegated to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport & Housing Delivery in consultation with the Planning Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and main opposition spokesperson.

### **5. Planning Committee decision contrary to officer recommendation**

- 5.1 In determining planning applications, Planning Committee is entitled to decide the weight to be attached to the various planning considerations relevant to the application. This could lead to a decision being taken contrary to the recommendation of the officers. In these circumstances, it is essential that the reasons for the decision are clear in the minds of the Committee members, and that they are valid and reasonable planning reasons.
- 5.2 Where the Committee is considering a motion to make a decision contrary to officer's recommendation (whether for approval or refusal), the reasons for the recommendation shall be made clear at the meeting prior to the Committee voting on the motion and a detailed minute will be made. The officer shall also be given the opportunity to explain any implications of the contrary decision before the vote is taken.
- 5.3 As part of any motion for refusal of a planning application against officer recommendation, a member of the Committee must be put forward to represent the Council at any subsequent appeal of the decision should the motion be carried and planning permission refused.

## **6. Public Question Time and Public Participation at Planning Committee**

- 6.1 This paragraph explains how the public may ask questions of the Planning Committee and how applicants for planning permission and other persons who may be affected by a proposed development may speak to the Committee.
- 6.2 The agenda for each meeting is open for public inspection at the Civic Centre Entrance (Rochdale Road) and at Access Oldham (Cheapside Entrance) (when accessible) and on the Council's website from five working days preceding the meeting.

### **Public question time**

- a) The Committee will consider questions relating to general planning issues and procedures but NOT about individual planning applications or enforcement matters.
- b) Questions must be submitted in writing to Constitutional Services no later than 12.00 noon, two days preceding the meeting (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays).
- c) The Chair, or some other person at the request of the Chair, shall read out the question.
- d) A Member of the Committee may speak to any question, then the Chair of the Committee will give a verbal response to the question(s) at the meeting. The Chair's response will be confirmed in writing within five working days of the meeting.
- e) Questions regarding individual matters should be addressed to the Council's Planning Officers in the first instance.

## **Consideration of planning applications by the Planning Committee – public participation**

6.3 The definitive lists of applications for consideration by the Committee will be completed five working days before the meeting. Please contact Constitutional Services to find out if your applications is on the list of applications to be considered. If it is listed, please advise the Constitutional Services Officer if you wish to speak stating whether you support or object to the proposal. Requests to speak must be received no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting.

6.4 Procedure Notes to all Speakers:

- a) The number of speakers will be limited to two, namely an objector or a representative of the objectors, and the applicant or a representative of the applicant. A Ward Councillor may also speak on an application in their ward.
- b) It is important to inform Constitutional Services as soon as possible if you wish to speak to the Committee since only the first person to do so will normally be invited to speak.
- c) Speakers will be allowed to speak for up to 3 minutes to state their case. This time period will be strictly enforced. Speakers should make comments only, and not ask questions of officers or Committee Members.
- d) Where there are a number of objectors, a representative should be nominated to speak, failing which the first person to have informed Constitutional Services of a wish to speak, will be invited to speak to the Committee.
- e) The public speaking procedure does not allow electronic video presentations or distribution of letters/statements/photographs, etc.to Members of the Planning Committee immediately before or during the meeting.
- f) Ward Members will be allowed to speak for up to 5 minutes and should make comments only and not ask questions of officers or Committee Members.

## **7. Training for Planning Committee Members**

7.1 All Members of the Planning Committee shall undertake training on the following matters, on an annual basis before serving on the Committee:

- An Overview of the English Planning system
- The Determination of Planning Applications
- The role of Planning Committee and its members in determining planning applications
- Matters of Predisposition and Predetermination
- Planning Committee procedures

- 7.2 That annual training will be provided via an in-person training session following the agreement of the membership of Planning Committee at a council meeting and in advance of the first Planning Committee of the municipal year. The date of the training will be provided in the municipal calendar at the annual council meeting and members must ensure they are available to attend that mandatory training before they are proposed as a member of the committee.
- 7.3 Other voluntary training sessions may from time to time be arranged by Officers to ensure Members are fully briefed and trained on any changes to legislation or procedures, or on particular planning-related matters that officers consider would be beneficial for Committee members.

## **8. Lobbying, Predetermination and Bias**

- 8.1 It is important that Members deciding planning applications should not put themselves in a position where they could be seen to have made their minds up on a particular planning issue before the Committee (predetermination). Lobbying is a normal and perfectly proper part of the political process, but how members of the Planning Committee respond to such lobbying in relation to a development proposal that is, or is likely to be, subject to a planning application must be considered carefully to avoid predetermination.
- 8.2 Section 25 of the Localism Act 2011 states that prior indications of a view of a matter does not amount to predetermination in the following situations: “(2) A decision-maker is not to be taken to have had, or to have appeared to have had, a closed mind when making the decision just because- (a) the decision-maker had previously done anything that directly or indirectly indicated what view the decision-maker took, or would or might take, in relation to a matter and (b) the matter was relevant to the decision.” This is the present position in law, so whilst Members are entitled to express a view in relation to an application, they should indicate they still have an open mind in relation to an application until they have had the opportunity to consider a Planning Committee report and heard all of the views on an application at Planning Committee, and that the final decision in relation to the application can only be made by Planning Committee.
- 8.3 Lobbying of Members for their support in relation to development applications is likely to come from applicants or their agents, or other interested third parties (e.g. landowners) looking for support for a proposed development and / or local residents or other third parties objecting to a proposed development
- 8.4 To avoid the appearance of bias and predetermination the following is recommended for Planning Committee members:
- a) Members should avoid expressing an opinion which may be taken as indicating that they have already made up their minds on an issue before they have the benefit of all the evidence and arguments. This may include comments made during debates in any other Council meetings or committees where future projects are being discussed.

- b) Members should never indicate the likely decision on an application by Committee or otherwise committing the Council .
  - c) Members should restrict themselves to giving procedural advice, including the Council's public consultation arrangements and how representations can be made.
  - d) Members should refer any approaches to Planning Officers and/or where considered appropriate, and possible, direct the lobbyist to another Member of Council not on Planning Committee.
  - e) Where a Member receives written representations, documents or other information directly in relation to a planning application under consideration, or a prospective application, a copy of the correspondence, documents or information should be passed to the Planning Service in order that they can be included in the Committee Report. When this is not possible due to timescales, the Member should present the representations, documents and information at the Committee meeting.
  - f) Members should make it clear that they will only be in a position to make a final decision after having heard all the relevant evidence and arguments at the Committee meeting. The Committee report may well contain issues previously unknown to the Councillors. Also, further aspects affecting the decision can arise during the discussion or through public speaking rights at the meeting, which were not previously evident.
  - g) Members of the Planning Committee or other decision-making Committee should not organise support for, or opposition to, a planning application, adoption of a policy or any other planning related issue, or seek to lobby other Members or act as advocate.
- 8.5 Members should report instances of significant or persistent or inappropriate lobbying, particularly from an applicant or their agent, to the Monitoring Officer.
- 8.6 No Member of Council should state, or give the impression, that he/she is able to secure a particular outcome on a planning application.
- 8.7 A Member sitting on the Planning Committee who represents a ward affected by a planning proposal may be in a difficult position, particularly if it is a controversial application. If a Ward Member responds to lobbying by going public in support of a particular outcome it will be difficult for that Member to argue convincingly when Committee makes a decision that he/she has carefully weighed up all the evidence and arguments presented.
- 8.8 Whilst not amounting to an interest, that Member would have prejudiced their position in the decision-making process on that application.

8.9 Any Member of the Planning Committee who responds to lobbying by going public in support of a particular outcome on a planning application prior to a Committee meeting should make an open declaration at the meeting at which the application is considered and not vote on the issue. The Member may seek to address the meeting on the same basis as a non-committee member.

8.10 This could be seen as a restriction on the Councillor's wish, and duty, to represent the views of the electorate. The situation therefore underlines the advice earlier in this section, that Members should await the presentation of all the evidence at a Committee meeting before making a final decision.

## **9. Discussions/meetings between applicants, the Council and local communities**

9.1 Discussions and meetings between potential applicants or their agents and the Council prior to the submission of an application, are encouraged and can be of considerable benefit to both parties. Typically, this is done through the pre- application advice service which the Council's Planning Service offers. Unless the applicant waives their right to confidentiality, these pre-application discussions with officers are held in confidence. This is because part of the purpose of such a service is to enable a prospective purchaser or developer to air ideas and possible proposals in a "safe space", before they settle on a preferred development option to include in a planning application. Keeping such discussions in confidence can be helpful, for example, where a developer has an option on acquiring land, or is in competition to acquire it and disclosure of proposals could prejudice a negotiating position. The role of the Planning Service in these discussions is, without prejudice to any decision of the Council, to explain and interpret the relevant policies which will apply to a proposal.

9.2 Through the pre-application advice process, officers may give an indication of the recommendation which is likely to be made on any subsequent application if the proposals are taken forward, particularly in the light of the provisions of the adopted Development Plan. It will always be made clear to the applicant that this does not bind the Council to making a particular decision, whether the decision on any subsequent planning application is to be made by Planning Committee or will be a delegated officer decision.

9.3 In many cases, and particularly major or complex proposals, developers will seek to share their proposals with the public and the Council before making a planning application. This allows developers to inform the public at the earliest opportunity and undertake meaningful community engagement and to inform and shape development to meet community aspirations and address policy requirements.

9.4 Early discussions with officers and, in appropriate circumstances, with relevant Members about significant future development proposals are therefore encouraged, provided that they do not become, or are seen to be part of the lobbying process. Guidance on these issues has been published by central government and the Local Government Association.

9.5 In order to avoid such problems, any meetings and discussions with potential applicants, or their agents, should take place within the guidelines set out below:

- a) It should always be made clear at the outset that the discussions will not bind the Council to making a particular decision and that any opinions expressed are provisions and are not those of the Council. Officers and Members should clearly explain at the outset their role.
- b) By the very nature of such discussions, not all relevant information will be to hand, and in the case of pre-application discussions, no formal consultations with interested parties will have taken place.
- c) Any advice made by officers should be impartial and based upon the Development Plan and material planning considerations.
- d) A written note should be made of any discussion/meeting and placed on the appropriate file. Where a developer prepares a note of the meeting, this should be checked for accuracy and retained on file, and the developer informed in writing of any material inaccuracies.
- e) A follow up note or letter should be sent following any potentially contentious meeting or a meeting involving a number of issues or where documentary material has been left with the Council.
- f) Care should be taken to ensure that advice is impartial, and seen to be, otherwise a subsequent report could appear to be promoting a particular view. No indication should be given at the pre application stage as to what recommendation will be made when the application is submitted.
- g) Under no circumstances should Members arrange to meet applicants/agents or third parties for the purposes of a site inspection.

9.6 Where councillors are involved in meetings with developers the following additional requirements will apply:

- a) Community engagement about a specific development proposal is often best undertaken by the prospective developer at the pre-application stage. This will generally be considered when a developer is certain of making an application and wishes to inform the community and canvass opinion about the proposals, so these may be taken into account in the submitted scheme. It is not normally the role of the Council or any councillor to organise this engagement. However, if a councillor did decide to organise such a pre application meeting, the developer should be invited as well as the public and the purpose should be clear that it is to obtain information and views from both sides. In certain cases, it would also be advisable to invite relevant consultees.

- b) Members who wish to engage in such preliminary discussions should notify the Planning Service in writing so that their involvement can be recorded on the relevant planning file.
- c) It is however important as community representatives, that Members should be able to participate and meaningfully contribute at this stage of the process, when developments are being formulated. Care will however need to be taken so that a participating councillor is not seen to have prejudged the proposal if they are intending to sit on the Planning Committee when the resulting application is submitted for determination. Any consultation process should be transparent and maintain the probity of the process. The role of a councillor who wishes to take part in any future Committee debate on the application is different from that of a community leader, in that it must be more passive and independent, due to the constraints of the planning process, and the need to maintain probity. This role is one of facilitation, of bringing the two sides together to exchange information and views. The councillor could even articulate the views of the community, without being prejudiced, providing it was made clear they did not necessarily hold those views and would only make a judgement as and when the application presented to Committee for consideration, along with all the accompanying Officer advice and information. If, however, the councillor takes a more active role in promoting or opposing a development, an interest must be declared.
- d) When councillors take an active role in preliminary discussions/community engagement exercises, it is recommended they provide a written note of this to the Planning Service, in order this is retained on the planning file. This should also be reported to Committee.
- e) Where a councillor sitting on the Planning Committee, which would determine any proposal once it is submitted, decides to participate in a community engagement exercise, and has expressed a particular viewpoint, which could be seen as prejudicial or having formed a view on the application, the councillor must declare the interest and leave the room whilst the application is determined, unless they decide to make representations to the Committee under the normal public speaking arrangements. This involvement should also be minuted.

9.7 The same rules apply to meetings and discussions once a planning application has been made.

### **Extract of the Executive Procedure Rules (Part 4 D) of the Constitution, Paragraph 3.5**

3.5 If, for any reason:

- a) the Leader is unable to act or the office of Leader is vacant; and
- b) the Deputy Leader is unable to act or the office of Deputy Leader is vacant, the Cabinet must act in the place of the Leader or arrange for a Cabinet Member to act in his/her place. For clarification, in the event that the office of Leader becomes vacant, a Leader will be appointed at a Council meeting as soon as possible.

3.6 In the event of there being no Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet members, executive functions shall in the interim be carried out by the Chief Executive, subject to the Access to Information Rules.

### **Extract of Section 9C - Delegations to Specific Officers**

#### **Chief Executive**

- 4. The Chief Executive is authorised to take any emergency decisions in respect of Council functions (in consultation, where appropriate, with the Mayor or the Chair of the relevant Committee) which cannot be delayed until the next meeting of the Council or the relevant Committee, as the case may be.
- 5. The Chief Executive is authorised to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet Meeting.

## **Appendix 1: Proposed changes applied**

### **Extract of the Council Constitution Part 3 Responsibility for Functions**

#### **4.2. Planning Committee**

- 4.2.1 The Planning Committee will undertake Council (or 'non-executive') functions as defined in Part A of Schedule 1 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations 2000 (as amended) where planning applications are referred to the committee in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 ("the 2026 Regulations").
- 4.2.2 For the purposes of fulfilling the 2026 Regulations, the nominated officer will be the Assistant Director for Planning and Development or, in their absence, the Director of Growth. The nominated member will be the Chair of Planning Committee or, in their absence, the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.
- 4.2.3 In accordance with the 2026 Regulations, all planning applications would initially be delegated to officers for a decision.
- 4.2.4 As per Regulation 6, "own-interest" applications may be referred to the Planning Committee for a decision where the nominated officer and nominated member agree. An "own-interest" application is one where:
- a) the application is made (whether or not jointly with any other person) by or on behalf of:
    - i. the authority,
    - ii. a member of the authority, or
    - iii. an officer of the authority, or
  - b) in the view of the nominated member and the nominated officer, the authority or any of its members or officers otherwise has an interest in the application.
- 4.2.5 In line with Regulation 5, applications that fall within Schedule 2 may also be referred to the Planning Committee for a decision, but only where the nominated officer and nominated member both agree that:
- 1) the proposal raises one or more significant planning matters having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations;
  - 2) the proposal raises one or more issues of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area; or
  - 3) the application has been made by the authority itself or an officer or member of the authority or an entity owned or controlled (whether wholly or partly) by that authority or any of its members or officers.
- 4.2.6 Where agreement cannot be reached by the nominated member and nominated officer, the application is to be determined by officers.

- 4.2.7 In accordance with Regulation 4, all applications that fall within Schedule 1 of the Regulations must be determined by an officer of the authority unless they are referred as an “own-interest” application under Regulation 6,
- 4.2.8 A record will be kept of the cases the nominated officer and nominated member have considered for referral to the Planning Committee, the outcome of their consideration and the reasons for their decision. This will be reported to the Planning Committee on a regular basis and made available on the council’s website.
- 4.2.9 Given the number of applications in the Oldham borough that fall within Schedule 2 and the number of officers employed by the council whose role has no connection to the local planning authority functions, the type of applications to be considered for referral will only include:
- a) Applications for minerals or waste development that fall within Schedule 2;
  - b) Applications involving the provision of:
    - i. 20 or more dwellings; or
    - ii. Residential development on a site area of 1 hectare or more;
  - c) Applications for the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1000 square metres or more;
  - d) Applications for retail, commercial, industrial or other development on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more;
  - e) Applications which require an environmental statement;
  - f) Applications that fall within Schedule 2 which are notifiable departures from the Council’s Development Plan;
  - g) Applications (within Schedules 1 and 2) submitted by a Councillor, senior Council Officer (Officers on senior manager pay grade and above) or a member of staff employed within the Planning and Development service area, or by an immediate family member or partner of these persons;
  - h) Applications (that fall under Schedule 2) to remove or vary conditions where the relevant planning condition was agreed by the Planning Committee in addition to those recommended in the Officer’s report; and
  - i) Applications for Listed Building Consent where a connected planning application for the development concerned falls under categories (a) to (h) above.

On related matters, the following may also be considered by the Planning Committee:

- j) Consultations from adjoining local authorities, including the Peak District National Park Authority, which fall into the categories (a) to (f) above, where officers recommend that the Council should raise an objection is raised to the proposed development; and
- k) The nomination of a Member of the Planning Committee to represent the Council at any subsequent hearing or inquiry where the decision of the Committee was made contrary to Officer advice.

## **Extract of the Council Constitution Part 8 – Planning Committee Participation Protocols**

### **Protocol for Planning Committee meetings**

#### **1. Referral procedure for planning applications to Planning Committee**

- 1.1 In accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026, all planning applications would initially be delegated to officers for a decision. The same regulations allow some applications to be referred to the Planning Committee for a decision by agreement of a nominated officer and a nominated member in certain circumstances. Part 3, section 4.2 of the Council's Constitution establishes that the nominated officer will be the Assistant Director for Planning and Development or, in their absence, the Director of Growth. The nominated member will be the Chair of the Planning Committee or, in their absence, the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.
- 1.2 As planning applications are validated by the local planning authority, they appear on a weekly list which is distributed to all members and various other organisations and interested parties. Within the weekly list, applications that fall within the list (a) – (i) set out at Part 3, section 4.2 of the Constitution will be highlighted, and the nominated officer will contact the nominated member, making their recommendation as to whether the applications should be referred to the Planning Committee or not. The nominated officer and nominated member will discuss the merits of those highlighted applications and agree whether to refer the applications to the Planning Committee or not.
- 1.3 In accordance with the regulations, the referral of an application to committee must meet one of the following criteria:
  - 1) the proposal raises one or more significant planning matters having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations;
  - 2) the proposal raises one or more issues of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area; or
  - 3) the application has been made by the authority itself or an officer or member of the authority or an entity owned or controlled (whether wholly or partly) by that authority or any of its members or officers.
- 1.4 A record will be kept of the cases the nominated officer and nominated member have considered for referral to the Planning Committee, the outcome of their consideration and the reasons for their decision. This will be reported to the Planning Committee on a regular basis and made available on the council's website.

- 1.5 Under the 2026 Regulations, there is no longer an opportunity for Ward Councillors to request that a specific planning application be referred to Planning Committee. However, Ward Councillors may request to speak on an application that is referred to Planning Committee. They may only do so where the application is within their ward and should contact Constitutional Services once the application is on a published agenda for Planning Committee.

## **2. Procedure for considering planning applications at Planning Committee**

- 2.1 The Committee agenda will include a report on each application which sets out all material considerations and the Officer's recommendation. Members of the Committee are, therefore, already aware of the relevant issues for any application at a Committee meeting.
- 2.2 The Planning Officer will introduce the report and a Supplementary Late Information List will report any matters that have arisen since the publication of the report, for example, the receipt of further letters or proposed new / amended conditions.
- 2.3 The Chair will invite the objector or a representative of the objectors (if any) to speak. Members may ask questions of the objector or representative of the objectors to clarify any points that have been made.
- 2.4 The Chair will invite the applicant or a representative of the applicant to speak in support of the application and on issues raised by objectors. Members may ask the applicant or a representative of the applicant to clarify the proposals or their response to the objections.
- 2.5 Ward Councillors not on the Committee may speak on applications affecting their Ward at a meeting of the Planning Committee. Members may ask questions of the Ward Councillors to clarify any comments they have made.
- 2.6 The Planning or other Officers (as appropriate) will be invited to comment on issues raised by the speakers.
- 2.7 The Committee will then debate the issues and may ask questions of the Planning and other Officers and make a decision on the application (see below).
- 2.8 On occasions, an application may be deferred by Committee without debate of the issues, for example because further information is awaited. In such cases, speakers will not be permitted to address the Committee until the application is debated at a future meeting. Speakers will be notified of the date of the meeting which will determine the application. If the Committee defers an application after hearing from a speaker or speakers, for example to carry out a site visit, no speaker, apart from Ward Members, will be allowed to address the Committee at a subsequent meeting considering the application unless the application has been materially altered. Speakers will be notified in writing of the determination of the application.

- 2.9 Members of the public are not allowed to take part in the debate and may not question Members, Officers or applicants whilst the Committee is determining the application. No documents, photos or other material may be circulated by the applicant, objector or Ward Member (as appropriate) at the Committee meeting.
- 2.10 Anyone registered to speak on an application arriving after the application has been dealt with will not be allowed to speak on that application.

### **3. Decisions by Planning Committee**

3.1 Having regard to the fact that decisions on planning applications are made in the public arena, Members of Planning Committee should conduct their business in a fair and sensitive manner. The debate on a planning application should be confined to the planning merits, or otherwise, of a development proposal.

3.2 The following principles should be observed when planning applications are determined.

- i) a party whip should not be applied on a planning application ;
- ii) it is for Members as individuals to balance the proper planning considerations in order to reach their own judgement on a planning proposal on the basis of information before them;
- iii) it is wrong for a Member to vote on a planning application without coming to a properly balanced judgement on the basis of proper planning considerations.

3.3 The Council has a duty to process applications without undue delay. Applications should not be deferred as a delaying tactic or to put off making a decision because of the number of objectors at a meeting or because of uncertainty in the face of opposing parties being present at the meeting.

3.4 Decisions taken by Committee should be open and transparent in the sense that any fact or document which Committee takes into account in coming to a decision should be a matter of public record.

### **4. Consultation with Chair, Vice-Chair and Opposition Spokesperson of Planning Committee**

4.1 There will be occasions when the Planning Committee has considered an application but is not able to issue a final decision because all statutory obligations have not been fulfilled. It is anticipated that referrals of this kind will be used infrequently.

4.2 In these cases, and at the Committee's discretion, the decision may be delegated to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport & Housing Delivery in consultation with the Planning Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and main opposition spokesperson.

## **5. Planning Committee decision contrary to officer recommendation**

- 5.1 In determining planning applications, Planning Committee is entitled to decide the weight to be attached to the various planning considerations relevant to the application. This could lead to a decision being taken contrary to the recommendation of the officers. In these circumstances, it is essential that the reasons for the decision are clear in the minds of the Committee members, and that they are valid and reasonable planning reasons.
- 5.2 Where the Committee is considering a motion to make a decision contrary to officer's recommendation (whether for approval or refusal), the reasons for the recommendation shall be made clear at the meeting prior to the Committee voting on the motion and a detailed minute will be made. The officer shall also be given the opportunity to explain any implications of the contrary decision before the vote is taken.
- 5.3 As part of any motion for refusal of a planning application against officer recommendation, a member of the Committee must be put forward to represent the Council at any subsequent appeal of the decision should the motion be carried and planning permission refused.

## **6. Public Question Time and Public Participation at Planning Committee**

- 6.1 This paragraph explains how the public may ask questions of the Planning Committee and how applicants for planning permission and other persons who may be affected by a proposed development may speak to the Committee.
- 6.2 The agenda for each meeting is open for public inspection at the Civic Centre Entrance (Rochdale Road) and at Access Oldham (Cheapside Entrance) (when accessible) and on the Council's website from five working days preceding the meeting.

### **Public question time**

- a) The Committee will consider questions relating to general planning issues and procedures but NOT about individual planning applications or enforcement matters.
- b) Questions must be submitted in writing to Constitutional Services no later than 12.00 noon, two days preceding the meeting (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays).
- c) The Chair, or some other person at the request of the Chair, shall read out the question.
- d) A Member of the Committee may speak to any question, then the Chair of the Committee will give a verbal response to the question(s) at the meeting. The Chair's response will be confirmed in writing within five working days of the meeting.
- e) Questions regarding individual matters should be addressed to the Council's Planning Officers in the first instance.

## **Consideration of planning applications by the Planning Committee – public participation**

6.3 The definitive lists of applications for consideration by the Committee will be completed five working days before the meeting. Please contact Constitutional Services to find out if your applications is on the list of applications to be considered. If it is listed, please advise the Constitutional Services Officer if you wish to speak stating whether you support or object to the proposal. Requests to speak must be received no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting.

6.4 Procedure Notes to all Speakers:

- a) The number of speakers will be limited to two, namely an objector or a representative of the objectors, and the applicant or a representative of the applicant. A Ward Councillor may also speak on an application in their ward.
- b) It is important to inform Constitutional Services as soon as possible if you wish to speak to the Committee since only the first person to do so will normally be invited to speak.
- c) Speakers will be allowed to speak for up to 3 minutes to state their case. This time period will be strictly enforced. Speakers should make comments only, and not ask questions of officers or Committee Members.
- d) Where there are a number of objectors, a representative should be nominated to speak, failing which the first person to have informed Constitutional Services of a wish to speak, will be invited to speak to the Committee.
- e) The public speaking procedure does not allow electronic video presentations or distribution of letters/statements/photographs, etc.to Members of the Planning Committee immediately before or during the meeting.
- f) Ward Members will be allowed to speak for up to 5 minutes and should make comments only and not ask questions of officers or Committee Members.

## **7. Training for Planning Committee Members**

7.1 All Members of the Planning Committee shall undertake training on the following matters, on an annual basis before serving on the Committee:

- An Overview of the English Planning system
- The Determination of Planning Applications
- The role of Planning Committee and its members in determining planning applications
- Matters of Predisposition and Predetermination
- Planning Committee procedures

- 7.2 That annual training will be provided via an in-person training session following the agreement of the membership of Planning Committee at a council meeting and in advance of the first Planning Committee of the municipal year. The date of the training will be provided in the municipal calendar at the annual council meeting and members must ensure they are available to attend that mandatory training before they are proposed as a member of the committee.
- 7.3 Other voluntary training sessions may from time to time be arranged by Officers to ensure Members are fully briefed and trained on any changes to legislation or procedures, or on particular planning-related matters that officers consider would be beneficial for Committee members.

## **8. Lobbying, Predetermination and Bias**

- 8.1 It is important that Members deciding planning applications should not put themselves in a position where they could be seen to have made their minds up on a particular planning issue before the Committee (predetermination). Lobbying is a normal and perfectly proper part of the political process, but how members of the Planning Committee respond to such lobbying in relation to a development proposal that is, or is likely to be, subject to a planning application must be considered carefully to avoid predetermination.
- 8.2 Section 25 of the Localism Act 2011 states that prior indications of a view of a matter does not amount to predetermination in the following situations: “(2) A decision-maker is not to be taken to have had, or to have appeared to have had, a closed mind when making the decision just because- (a) the decision-maker had previously done anything that directly or indirectly indicated what view the decision-maker took, or would or might take, in relation to a matter and (b) the matter was relevant to the decision.” This is the present position in law, so whilst Members are entitled to express a view in relation to an application, they should indicate they still have an open mind in relation to an application until they have had the opportunity to consider a Planning Committee report and heard all of the views on an application at Planning Committee, and that the final decision in relation to the application can only be made by Planning Committee.
- 8.3 Lobbying of Members for their support in relation to development applications is likely to come from applicants or their agents, or other interested third parties (e.g. landowners) looking for support for a proposed development and / or local residents or other third parties objecting to a proposed development
- 8.4 To avoid the appearance of bias and predetermination the following is recommended for Planning Committee members:
- a) Members should avoid expressing an opinion which may be taken as indicating that they have already made up their minds on an issue before they have the benefit of all the evidence and arguments. This may include comments made during debates in any other Council meetings or committees where future projects are being discussed.

- b) Members should never indicate the likely decision on an application by Committee or otherwise committing the Council .
  - c) Members should restrict themselves to giving procedural advice, including the Council's public consultation arrangements and how representations can be made.
  - d) Members should refer any approaches to Planning Officers and/or where considered appropriate, and possible, direct the lobbyist to another Member of Council not on Planning Committee.
  - e) Where a Member receives written representations, documents or other information directly in relation to a planning application under consideration, or a prospective application, a copy of the correspondence, documents or information should be passed to the Planning Service in order that they can be included in the Committee Report. When this is not possible due to timescales, the Member should present the representations, documents and information at the Committee meeting.
  - f) Members should make it clear that they will only be in a position to make a final decision after having heard all the relevant evidence and arguments at the Committee meeting. The Committee report may well contain issues previously unknown to the Councillors. Also, further aspects affecting the decision can arise during the discussion or through public speaking rights at the meeting, which were not previously evident.
  - g) Members of the Planning Committee or other decision-making Committee should not organise support for, or opposition to, a planning application, adoption of a policy or any other planning related issue, or seek to lobby other Members or act as advocate.
- 8.5 Members should report instances of significant or persistent or inappropriate lobbying, particularly from an applicant or their agent, to the Monitoring Officer.
- 8.6 No Member of Council should state, or give the impression, that he/she is able to secure a particular outcome on a planning application.
- 8.7 A Member sitting on the Planning Committee who represents a ward affected by a planning proposal may be in a difficult position, particularly if it is a controversial application. If a Ward Member responds to lobbying by going public in support of a particular outcome it will be difficult for that Member to argue convincingly when Committee makes a decision that he/she has carefully weighed up all the evidence and arguments presented.
- 8.8 Whilst not amounting to an interest, that Member would have prejudiced their position in the decision-making process on that application.

8.9 Any Member of the Planning Committee who responds to lobbying by going public in support of a particular outcome on a planning application prior to a Committee meeting should make an open declaration at the meeting at which the application is considered and not vote on the issue. The Member may seek to address the meeting on the same basis as a non-committee member.

8.10 This could be seen as a restriction on the Councillor's wish, and duty, to represent the views of the electorate. The situation therefore underlines the advice earlier in this section, that Members should await the presentation of all the evidence at a Committee meeting before making a final decision.

## **9. Discussions/meetings between applicants, the Council and local communities**

9.1 Discussions and meetings between potential applicants or their agents and the Council prior to the submission of an application, are encouraged and can be of considerable benefit to both parties. Typically, this is done through the pre- application advice service which the Council's Planning Service offers. Unless the applicant waives their right to confidentiality, these pre-application discussions with officers are held in confidence. This is because part of the purpose of such a service is to enable a prospective purchaser or developer to air ideas and possible proposals in a "safe space", before they settle on a preferred development option to include in a planning application. Keeping such discussions in confidence can be helpful, for example, where a developer has an option on acquiring land, or is in competition to acquire it and disclosure of proposals could prejudice a negotiating position. The role of the Planning Service in these discussions is, without prejudice to any decision of the Council, to explain and interpret the relevant policies which will apply to a proposal.

9.2 Through the pre-application advice process, officers may give an indication of the recommendation which is likely to be made on any subsequent application if the proposals are taken forward, particularly in the light of the provisions of the adopted Development Plan. It will always be made clear to the applicant that this does not bind the Council to making a particular decision, whether the decision on any subsequent planning application is to be made by Planning Committee or will be a delegated officer decision.

9.3 In many cases, and particularly major or complex proposals, developers will seek to share their proposals with the public and the Council before making a planning application. This allows developers to inform the public at the earliest opportunity and undertake meaningful community engagement and to inform and shape development to meet community aspirations and address policy requirements.

9.4 Early discussions with officers and, in appropriate circumstances, with relevant Members about significant future development proposals are therefore encouraged, provided that they do not become, or are seen to be part of the lobbying process. Guidance on these issues has been published by central government and the Local Government Association.

9.5 In order to avoid such problems, any meetings and discussions with potential applicants, or their agents, should take place within the guidelines set out below:

- a) It should always be made clear at the outset that the discussions will not bind the Council to making a particular decision and that any opinions expressed are provisions and are not those of the Council. Officers and Members should clearly explain at the outset their role.
- b) By the very nature of such discussions, not all relevant information will be to hand, and in the case of pre-application discussions, no formal consultations with interested parties will have taken place.
- c) Any advice made by officers should be impartial and based upon the Development Plan and material planning considerations.
- d) A written note should be made of any discussion/meeting and placed on the appropriate file. Where a developer prepares a note of the meeting, this should be checked for accuracy and retained on file, and the developer informed in writing of any material inaccuracies.
- e) A follow up note or letter should be sent following any potentially contentious meeting or a meeting involving a number of issues or where documentary material has been left with the Council.
- f) Care should be taken to ensure that advice is impartial, and seen to be, otherwise a subsequent report could appear to be promoting a particular view. No indication should be given at the pre application stage as to what recommendation will be made when the application is submitted.
- g) Under no circumstances should Members arrange to meet applicants/agents or third parties for the purposes of a site inspection.

9.6 Where councillors are involved in meetings with developers the following additional requirements will apply:

- a) Community engagement about a specific development proposal is often best undertaken by the prospective developer at the pre-application stage. This will generally be considered when a developer is certain of making an application and wishes to inform the community and canvass opinion about the proposals, so these may be taken into account in the submitted scheme. It is not normally the role of the Council or any councillor to organise this engagement. However, if a councillor did decide to organise such a pre application meeting, the developer should be invited as well as the public and the purpose should be clear that it is to obtain information and views from both sides. In certain cases, it would also be advisable to invite relevant consultees.

- b) Members who wish to engage in such preliminary discussions should notify the Planning Service in writing so that their involvement can be recorded on the relevant planning file.
- c) It is however important as community representatives, that Members should be able to participate and meaningfully contribute at this stage of the process, when developments are being formulated. Care will however need to be taken so that a participating councillor is not seen to have prejudged the proposal if they are intending to sit on the Planning Committee when the resulting application is submitted for determination. Any consultation process should be transparent and maintain the probity of the process. The role of a councillor who wishes to take part in any future Committee debate on the application is different from that of a community leader, in that it must be more passive and independent, due to the constraints of the planning process, and the need to maintain probity. This role is one of facilitation, of bringing the two sides together to exchange information and views. The councillor could even articulate the views of the community, without being prejudiced, providing it was made clear they did not necessarily hold those views and would only make a judgement as and when the application presented to Committee for consideration, along with all the accompanying Officer advice and information. If, however, the councillor takes a more active role in promoting or opposing a development, an interest must be declared.
- d) When councillors take an active role in preliminary discussions/community engagement exercises, it is recommended they provide a written note of this to the Planning Service, in order this is retained on the planning file. This should also be reported to Committee.
- e) Where a councillor sitting on the Planning Committee, which would determine any proposal once it is submitted, decides to participate in a community engagement exercise, and has expressed a particular viewpoint, which could be seen as prejudicial or having formed a view on the application, the councillor must declare the interest and leave the room whilst the application is determined, unless they decide to make representations to the Committee under the normal public speaking arrangements. This involvement should also be minuted.

9.7 The same rules apply to meetings and discussions once a planning application has been made.

### **Extract of the Executive Procedure Rules (Part 4 D) of the Constitution, Paragraph 3.5**

3.5 If, for any reason:

- a) the Leader is unable to act or the office of Leader is vacant; and
- b) the Deputy Leader is unable to act or the office of Deputy Leader is vacant, the Cabinet must act in the place of the Leader or arrange for a Cabinet Member to act in his/her place. For clarification, in the event that the office of Leader becomes vacant, a Leader will be appointed at a Council meeting as soon as possible.

3.6 In the event of there being no Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet members, executive functions shall in the interim be carried out by the Chief Executive, subject to the Access to Information Rules.

### **Extract of Section 9C - Delegations to Specific Officers**

#### **Chief Executive**

- 4. The Chief Executive is authorised to take any emergency decisions in respect of Council functions (in consultation, where appropriate, with the Mayor or the Chair of the relevant Committee) which cannot be delayed until the next meeting of the Council or the relevant Committee, as the case may be.
- 5. The Chief Executive is authorised to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet Meeting.



## Briefing Report to Full Council

# Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: Annual Review of Complaints 2025/26

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**Wednesday 16 September 2026**

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### Reason for Decision

To share with Group Leaders and Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board Oldham Council's overall performance in respect of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and our performance with comparable neighboring authorities.

### Executive Summary

This report incorporates the LGSCO's final 2025/26 publications, which the Ombudsman releases in two parts: (1) the Annual Review letter to the Chief Executive setting out the Council's overall performance, and (2) the national Annual Review and datasets/interactive performance map.

At the conclusion of the Council's corporate, Adult Social Care, and Children's Social Care complaint processes, residents may approach the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome. In line with our commitment to being a resident-focused Council, we use the LGSCO's findings each year to strengthen early resolution, learn from feedback, and drive improvements in service quality.

In 2025/26, the LGSCO received 82 complaints and enquiries relating to Oldham Council, an increase from 56 in 2024/25. This is in line with the national trend where complaints and enquiries to the Ombudsman rose by 33%. Despite the rise in complaints and enquiries to the Ombudsman in respect of Oldham Council, the overall figure for Oldham remains relatively low when compared to the scale of contact handled directly by the Council's Complaints Team.

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A total of 57 decisions were issued by the Ombudsman concerning Oldham Council. Of these, 1 was closed after advice was given, 27 were referred back for local resolution, 21 were closed after initial enquiries, 2 were recorded as incomplete or invalid and 6 were upheld following investigation. Although the upheld rate increased to 100%, only six investigations were completed during the year, compared with eleven in 2024/25. Consequently, the actual number of upheld complaints reduced from eight to six. The Ombudsman has highlighted concerns regarding the timeliness of Council responses during investigations. This has been reviewed and learning implemented to ensure strengthened processes.

In 2 out of the 6 upheld cases (33%), the Council had already provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman. This is significantly higher than the national average for similar authorities (16%), demonstrating the Council's proactive approach to addressing and resolving issues at an early stage.

Adjusted for Oldham's population, the upheld decisions equate to 2.4 per 100,000 residents, compared to a national average of 4.6 per 100,000 for similar authorities. On a longer-term basis, Oldham continues to perform strongly. The Council's two-year average of 2.9 upheld decisions per 100,000 residents is the lowest amongst Greater Manchester authorities and remains significantly below national averages.

The Council achieved 100% compliance with the Ombudsman's recommendations, matching the high national compliance rate.

These figures, performing consistently within the top performing councils within Greater Manchester, reflect Oldham Council's continued commitment to resolving complaints efficiently, learning from outcomes, and working constructively with residents to deliver improvements in service quality.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Elected Members consider the report and comment as appropriate.

## 1 Background

- 1.1 Oldham Council manages complaints about its services in accordance with five separate legislative frameworks:
  - The Local Government Act 1974 - Corporate complaints
  - The Children Act 1989 - Children's Social Care complaints
  - The Local Authority Social Services and NHS Complaints Regulations 2009 – Adult Social Care complaints
  - Housing complaints are managed under relevant housing legislation including the Housing Act 1996 and Localism Act 2011.
- 1.2 For Corporate, Adult Social Care, and Children's Social Care complaints, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) acts as the final stage in the process. The Ombudsman investigates complaints where residents remain dissatisfied after the Council has completed its internal complaints procedures.
- 1.3 Each year, the LGSCO publishes an Annual Review of Complaints, setting out the volume and outcomes of complaints received about each Local Authority. This report is submitted to the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for consideration to support oversight of the Council's complaint handling and responsiveness to external findings.
- 1.4 The LGSCO does not investigate complaints that are investigated under the Council's Housing Complaints policy. Such complaints are considered by the Housing Ombudsman and therefore, details of these complaints are not included within this report.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The LGSCO's Annual Review of Local Government Complaints 2025/26, confirms that the number of complaints nationally rose more sharply than at any time over the past 10 years. The number of complaints rose by 33%, to 27,625. This follows a previous record setting year in 2024/25, in which complaints rose by 16%.
- 2.2 Nationally the Ombudsman completed 4,335 detailed investigations and upheld 86% of those cases, continuing a rising trend in both volumes and fault findings and signaling persistent challenges in local government service delivery and complaint resolution.
- 2.3 Ombudsman casework shows that there is sustained strain on services and a gap between what residents expect and what they are receiving. In particular, the Ombudsman references Special Educational Needs, Adult Social Care and Housing services.
- 2.4 The Ombudsman has welcomed the publication of "Set Up to Fail?", independent research examining how local authorities respond to service improvement recommendations in SEND. The research confirms that although many of the problems driving complaints to the Ombudsman are rooted in national systemic failures, the way local authorities respond to these pressures, and how seriously they engage with learning from complaints, makes a measurable difference to outcomes for residents.

- 2.5 The Ombudsman's Annual Review also highlights the significant financial impact of poor decision making, delayed action and inadequate services. It emphasizes that getting decisions right first time is both better for residents and more cost effective for the Council.
- 2.6 The highest proportion of complaints and enquiries received by the Ombudsman related to Education and Children's Services (7,773 contacts), followed by Housing (5,279) and Adult Social Care (3,429).
- 2.7 The Ombudsman upheld 91% of complaints it investigated in respect of Education and Children's Services, 90% of complaints about Housing and 78% of Adult Social Care complaints.
- 2.8 In addition to the Annual Review of Complaints, the LGSCO writes to each Local Authority's Chief Executive every year to set out the Council's performance in handling complaints. This letter is an important tool for Members in scrutinising complaint handling. An interactive map setting out each council's performance is also available on the LGSCO website. The letter sent to Oldham's Chief Executive is attached at *Appendix A* and can also be viewed on the LGSCO website at: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance>.
- 2.9 The LGSCO is clear that the number of complaints and enquiries received should not be taken in isolation when reviewing a Local Authority's performance as this number can be affected by factors such as demographics, local conditions, the expectations of residents and the quality of signposting.
- 2.10 The number of upheld complaints, upheld rate (i.e. how often fault is found when a complaint is investigated), the proportion of suitable remedies identified, and compliance rates are all factors to take into consideration.
- 2.11 Looking ahead, the Ombudsman has identified local government reorganisation and devolution as a significant opportunity for councils to improve service delivery and strengthen public trust. The Ombudsman has stressed that effective complaint handling and organisational learning should be central to any future changes in governance or service arrangements, ensuring residents continue to have access to clear routes for redress and accountability.

### Regional Perspective

- 2.12 Table 1 compares the number of complaints and enquiries received by the LGSCO relating to Oldham Council with those of the other Greater Manchester (GM) authorities in 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- 2.13 Tables 2 and 3 show a comparison of the number of upheld complaints and uphold rates for Greater Manchester Authorities.

**Table 1 – GM Authorities: Total complaints and enquiries received by the LGSCO**

*\*Green shading indicates top performers on the metric shown (lower is better for volumes and uphold measures).*

| Authority | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | Two-year average |
|-----------|---------|---------|------------------|
| Oldham    | 56      | 82      | 69               |
| Tameside  | 93      | 78      | 85.5             |
| Bolton    | 73      | 84      | 78.5             |

|                   |            |             |             |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Rochdale</b>   | <b>55</b>  | <b>64</b>   | <b>59.5</b> |
| <b>Wigan</b>      | <b>59</b>  | <b>98</b>   | <b>78.5</b> |
| <b>Trafford</b>   | <b>68</b>  | <b>101</b>  | <b>84.5</b> |
| <b>Stockport</b>  | <b>70</b>  | <b>111</b>  | <b>90.5</b> |
| <b>Salford</b>    | <b>70</b>  | <b>122</b>  | <b>96</b>   |
| <b>Bury</b>       | <b>100</b> | <b>97</b>   | <b>98.5</b> |
| <b>Manchester</b> | <b>188</b> | <b>300</b>  | <b>244</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>832</b> | <b>1137</b> | <b>98.5</b> |

**Table 2 – GM Authorities - Upheld cases 2025/26**

| <b>Authority</b>  | <b>Number investigated</b> | <b>Not upheld</b> | <b>Upheld</b> |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>Oldham</b>     | <b>6</b>                   | <b>0</b>          | <b>6</b>      |
| <b>Rochdale</b>   | <b>7</b>                   | <b>2</b>          | <b>5</b>      |
| <b>Wigan</b>      | <b>12</b>                  | <b>3</b>          | <b>9</b>      |
| <b>Trafford</b>   | <b>11</b>                  | <b>2</b>          | <b>9</b>      |
| <b>Bolton</b>     | <b>13</b>                  | <b>2</b>          | <b>11</b>     |
| <b>Tameside</b>   | <b>19</b>                  | <b>2</b>          | <b>17</b>     |
| <b>Salford</b>    | <b>15</b>                  | <b>3</b>          | <b>12</b>     |
| <b>Stockport</b>  | <b>17</b>                  | <b>3</b>          | <b>14</b>     |
| <b>Bury</b>       | <b>21</b>                  | <b>3</b>          | <b>18</b>     |
| <b>Manchester</b> | <b>40</b>                  | <b>6</b>          | <b>34</b>     |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>161</b>                 | <b>26</b>         | <b>135</b>    |

**Table 3 – GM Authorities - Upheld rates 2025/26 and 2 year averages**

| <b>Authority</b>  | <b>2025/26 upheld rate (%)</b> | <b>Two-year average upheld rate (%)</b> | <b>2025/26 upheld per 100,000</b> | <b>Two-year average upheld per 100,000</b> |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Oldham</b>     | <b>100</b>                     | <b>86.4</b>                             | <b>2.4</b>                        | <b>2.9</b>                                 |
| <b>Trafford</b>   | <b>82</b>                      | <b>81</b>                               | <b>3.7</b>                        | <b>4.4</b>                                 |
| <b>Stockport</b>  | <b>82</b>                      | <b>77.9</b>                             | <b>4.6</b>                        | <b>4.7</b>                                 |
| <b>Manchester</b> | <b>85</b>                      | <b>81.8</b>                             | <b>5.8</b>                        | <b>4.8</b>                                 |
| <b>Rochdale</b>   | <b>71</b>                      | <b>77.8</b>                             | <b>2.1</b>                        | <b>3.5</b>                                 |
| <b>Tameside</b>   | <b>89</b>                      | <b>86.6</b>                             | <b>7.1</b>                        | <b>7</b>                                   |
| <b>Bury</b>       | <b>86</b>                      | <b>78.7</b>                             | <b>9</b>                          | <b>7</b>                                   |
| <b>Bolton</b>     | <b>82</b>                      | <b>82.5</b>                             | <b>3.5</b>                        | <b>3</b>                                   |

|                |             |             |            |            |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Wigan</b>   | 75          | 87.5        | 2.6        | 3.2        |
| <b>Salford</b> | 80          | 80.9        | 3.2        | 3.7        |
| <b>Average</b> | <b>83.2</b> | <b>82.1</b> | <b>4.4</b> | <b>4.4</b> |

- 1.1 8 of the 10 Greater Manchester authorities saw an increase in the number of complaints and enquiries made to the LGSCO in 2025/26 compared to 2024/25. The remaining two (Tameside and Bury) recorded decreases.
- 1.2 The LGSCO receives and decides cases across different business years. Therefore, the decisions issued in 2025/26 relate to a mix of complaints received in that year and some carried over from previous years.
- 1.3 Across Greater Manchester, 135 complaints were upheld in 2025/26 out of 161 investigations (see Table 2). Individual uphold rates vary by authority (Table 3), reflecting differences in case mix and local service pressures.
- 1.4 The average uphold rate across Greater Manchester authorities in 2024/25 was 82.1% (a slight increase from the previous two-year average of 80.7%).
- 1.5 The LGSCO's "upheld cases per 100,000 residents" continues to provide a useful proportional performance measure. In 2025/26, the Greater Manchester average was 4.4 upheld cases per 100,000, broadly in line with last year's 4.3.

### Local Perspective

- 1.6 The number of complaints and enquiries received by the Ombudsman regarding Oldham Council increased from 56 to 82 in 2025/26. Regionally, 8 Greater Manchester authorities saw increases this year, while two (Tameside and Bury) saw decreases.
- 1.7 The distribution of Ombudsman contacts about Oldham by service area in 2025/26 was as follows in Table 4 below:

| <b>Service</b>                                                  | <b>Total</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Environmental Services, Public Protection and Regulation</b> | 15           |
| <b>Education and Children's Services</b>                        | 14           |
| <b>Housing</b>                                                  | 12           |
| <b>Adult Social Care</b>                                        | 11           |
| <b>Benefits and Council Tax</b>                                 | 9            |
| <b>Corporate and Other Services</b>                             | 9            |
| <b>Planning and Development</b>                                 | 7            |
| <b>Highways and Transport</b>                                   | 5            |
| <b>Total</b>                                                    | <b>82</b>    |

- 1.8 With the exception of Adult Social Care, all service areas saw an increase in the number of complaints and enquiries raised with the Ombudsman.
- 1.9 Although the upheld rate increased to 100% in 2025/26, only 6 investigations were completed during the year, compared with 11 in 2024/25. Consequently, the actual number of upheld complaints reduced from 8 to 6, representing the second lowest number

of upheld decisions across Greater Manchester authorities. When viewed over a two-year period, Oldham's average uphold rate of 86.4% is much closer to the Greater Manchester average of 82.1%.

- 1.10 The number of upheld decisions per 100,000 population in Oldham was 2.4 in 2025/26, which is below the national and Greater Manchester average for similar authorities (4.6 and 4.4 respectively). Oldham's two-year average stands at 2.9 upheld cases per 100,000, which is the lowest across Greater Manchester authorities.
- 1.11 The LGSCO monitors how often councils identify a suitable remedy before the Ombudsman intervenes. In 2025/26, 33% of Oldham's upheld decisions had a suitable remedy already in place, which is significantly higher than both the Greater Manchester and national average for similar authorities (16%). This indicates a strong early-resolution approach locally.
- 1.12 Oldham Council continues to prioritise early and effective resolution of complaints. The relatively low proportion of LGSCO investigations, and the frequency with which appropriate remedies are already in place before Ombudsman involvement, suggest a strong commitment to learning from complaints and working constructively with residents to resolve concerns.
- 1.13 Further information on the upheld cases can be found in the table below.

**Table 5 – Issues identified as part of LGSCO investigations**

| Service                             | Decision | Summary                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Corporate and Other Services</b> | Upheld   | Complains the Council has not responded to his complaint which he submitted in 2024. He wants the Council to investigate and respond to the matter. |
| <b>Adult Care Services</b>          | Upheld   | Complains about delays in allocating a worker and undertaking a review of care and support needs.                                                   |
| <b>Planning &amp; Development</b>   | Upheld   | Complains the Council failed to properly investigate and enforce breaches of planning control he reported on a site near his home.                  |
| <b>Adult Care Services</b>          | Upheld   | Complains about the care provided in a Council commissioned care home.                                                                              |
| <b>Corporate and Other Services</b> | Upheld   | Complains about burial arrangements for a family member.                                                                                            |
| <b>Corporate and Other Services</b> | Upheld   | Complains that a Stage 3 panel did not make findings on all points and that there were delays in the complaints process.                            |

- 1.14 The Ombudsman made recommendations in respect of 4 upheld cases in 2025/26. Whilst all Ombudsman recommendations were implemented, one personal remedy was completed outside the agreed timescale. No cases were recorded as non-compliant.
- 1.15 Following the outcomes of the Ombudsman investigations and through the Council's own complaints learning process, a number of service improvements have been agreed or are in progress to help prevent recurrence of the issues identified, including:
- Sharing upheld decisions with individual services to aid learning

- Reviewing the process for handling complaints from elected members regarding senior officers
- Reminding relevant staff of the importance of record keeping, timeliness of enforcement investigations and explaining decision reasons/ outcomes
- Producing a policy and procedure for dealing with the probate of estates in which looked after children have an interest
- Reviewing its practice where a looked after child or young person experiences a bereavement to ensure that they are engaged in considering support options

- 1.16 Table 6 sets out the total number of complaints received by Oldham Council and the number of complaints and enquiries that were received by the Ombudsman in 2025/26. It should be noted that not all complaints and enquiries received by the Ombudsman progressed to the detailed investigation stage.

**Table 6 - The number of LGSCO enquiries and Oldham Council complaints 2025/26**

| Oldham Council Complaints | Complaints received by Oldham Council in 2025/26 | Complaints/enquiries received by the LGSCO | Upheld decisions by the LGSCO |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Number                    | 718                                              | 82                                         | 6                             |
| Percentage                | 100%                                             | 11%                                        | 0.8%                          |

- 1.17 A snapshot of the decisions made by the LGSCO in respect of Oldham Council is set out at Table 7.

**Table 7 - LGSCO decisions made concerning Oldham Council**

| Invalid or incomplete | Advice given | Referred back for local resolution | Closed after initial enquiries | Not upheld | Upheld | Total | Upheld rate (%) | Average upheld rate (%) of similar Authorities (nationally) |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|--------|-------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2                     | 1            | 27                                 | 21                             | 0          | 6      | 57    | 100%            | 83%                                                         |

- 1.18 The Ombudsman has highlighted in the letter issued to the Chief Executive in *Appendix A* concerns regarding the timeliness of Council responses to requests for information during investigations. In one case the delay was sufficiently serious that the Ombudsman advised it was considering formal powers to secure the information. Each case has been investigated to understand the reasons for delay. Process and technical improvements have been put in place to ensure timely review and allocation alongside strengthened monitoring and escalation arrangements.
- 1.19 All customer feedback is important to the Council as part of our commitment to maintain a resident-focused approach. In addition to 718 complaints, the Council's Complaints Team also recorded 231 compliments.
- 1.20 Furthermore, the Complaints Team recorded 1,395 service requests and 120 Children's Services representations; the Complaints Team works with services to help resolve such contacts to residents' satisfaction at the earliest opportunity to prevent escalation.

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### **3 2026/27 Priorities**

- 3.1 In order to maintain and further develop Ombudsman performance, the Complaints Team is looking to prioritise:
- Recruitment to its vacant Complaints Officer position
  - Implementation of a new complaint management system
  - Further provision of staff training in relation to complaint investigations, complaint responses and the handling of Ombudsman enquiries
- 3.2 It is hoped that the above will create capacity for the Complaints Team in order for it to have increased oversight of complex cases that are likely to escalate to the Ombudsman and ensure it can continue to complete robust quality checks on responses that are due to be issued at the final stage of the Council's complaints process.
- 3.3 Provision of additional staff training will help responding managers to complete high quality complaint responses and understand the importance of timely replies to Ombudsman enquiries.

### **4 Further information**

- 4.1 The LGSCO has moved away from a focus on the volume of complaints and pays more attention to the lessons that can be learned from complaints and the wider improvements that can be achieved for residents and this is now more widely publicised.
- 4.2 The LGSCO is keen that scrutiny Members play an active role in holding their Local Authority to account on complaints and has created a wide range of information to support scrutiny Members to carry out the scrutiny function for complaints handling. This can be found at <https://www.lgo.org.uk/for-advisors/scrutiny>.

### **5 Conclusion**

- 5.1 While Oldham Council saw an increase in its upheld rate, performance against other key Ombudsman measures places Oldham among the best in Greater Manchester. Oldham recorded the second lowest upheld case numbers across Greater Manchester authorities (6); in addition, it had the second lowest upheld cases per 100,000 residents (2.4), which is significantly below the national average for similar authorities (4.4) for 2025/26. When looking at the 2 year average, performance remains consistent, with lower than average upheld cases per 100,000 for similar authorities both nationally and across Greater Manchester.
- 5.2 Importantly, in a third of the upheld cases this year, the Council had already identified a suitable remedy before the Ombudsman became involved. This is above national and Greater Manchester average for similar authorities. It is an encouraging indication that services are taking responsibility early and making efforts to resolve complaints fairly and appropriately.

### **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 It is recommended that Elected Members consider the report and comment as appropriate.

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**7 Appendices**

**Appendix A - LGSCO Letter to Chief Executive**

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# Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

8 July 2026

*By email*

Mrs Kipling  
Chief Executive  
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

Dear Mrs Kipling

## **Annual Review Letter 2025–26**

I wrote to you in May with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2026. In that letter, I explained that where we had concerns about your organisation's complaint handling, or to highlight exceptional performance, I would write again, and I have set out our experience of your organisation's complaint handling below.

As a reminder, [your annual statistics are available here](#).

In addition, you can find details of the decisions we have made about your organisation, read the reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your organisation has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

This letter will be published on our website on 15 July 2026.

## **Your organisation's performance**

There were several occasions during the year when our investigations were delayed by your Council's failure to respond to our requests for information on time. This prevented us from progressing our investigations and is likely to have caused further frustration and distress to complainants. In one instance, the delay was such that we had to take the unusual step of threatening to issue a witness summons before the information was provided.

Please take action to improve the timeliness of your Council's responses. It is important that we receive requested information promptly and that any delays are clearly communicated. If there is any support my office can provide, please let me know.

## **Supporting complaints and service improvement**

We remain committed to supporting the sector to embed effective systems of redress. Where authorities are navigating reorganisation and devolution, we are ready to help ensure that robust complaint handling is built into new arrangements from the outset. Please do get in touch if your organisation would benefit from our advice and guidance.

Our [Complaint Handling Code](#), in force since April 2025, is now applied in our casework and offers structure and support to your local complaint system. Our training programme provides a flexible, expert-led route to building complaints capability across your teams, with courses open for individual delegates to book. Contact [training@lgo.org.uk](mailto:training@lgo.org.uk) for more information.

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Our Annual Review of Local Government Complaints will be published next week, setting out the national picture of complaints, trends across service areas, and emerging systemic issues. We encourage you to read it alongside your own organisation's data.

Yours sincerely,

A. K. Clarke

Amerdeep Clarke  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

## Report to Council

### Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025/26

**Officer Contact:** Lee Walsh –Director of Finance

**Report Author:** James Postle, Senior Finance Manager / Paula Buckley Finance Manager (Capital & Treasury)

**16 September 2026**

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#### Reason for Decision

This report advises Council of the performance of the Treasury Management function of the Council for 2025/26 and provides a comparison of performance against the 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators.

#### 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 outturn report provides an update and includes the requirement in the 2021 Code, mandatory from 1 April 2023, as a minimum semiannual and annual reports and quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. This report therefore sets out the key Treasury Management issues for Members' information and reviews and outlines:

- An economic update for 2025/26
- A review and updates of the Council's current treasury management position;
- Council Borrowing;
- Treasury Investment Activity;
- Treasury Performance for 2025/26;
- Treasury Management Prudential Indicators;

The report is presented to Council to enable it to have the opportunity to review and scrutinise the Treasury Management Outturn report.

#### Recommendations

That the Council considers and comments upon the Treasury Management Outturn report and the Treasury Management activity and outturn position.

## 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 as a minimum semi-annual and quarterly treasury management update reports; a requirement in the 2021 Code which is mandatory from 1 April 2023.
- 2.1.2 The treasury and prudential indicators are also incorporated at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.1.3 The Council's treasury management strategy for 2025/26 was approved 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 identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy.
- 2.1.4 The Treasury Management Half Year Update Report was presented to Audit Committee, Cabinet and subsequently approved at Council 10th December 2025
- 2.1.5 The Treasury Management Quarter 3 Update was presented to Audit Committee 26 March 2026.
- 2.1.6 This Outturn report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice, and covers the following:
- An economic update for 2025/26;
  - A review and updates of the Council's current treasury management position;
  - Council Borrowing;
  - Treasury Investment Activity;
  - Treasury Performance for the 205/26;
  - Treasury Management Prudential Indicators;

## 2.2 External Environment 2025/26

### Economic Background

- 2.2.1 The financial year was largely dominated by two periods of significant uncertainty and volatility. The first being the US trade tariff 'Liberation Day' in April 2025 and the second was the US/Israel war with Iran at the end of February 2026.
- 2.2.1 After the initial fallout from US trade tariffs, the following months saw some improvements as equity markets made gains and bond yields eased modestly. However, in the UK this trend in bond yields reversed somewhat as an uncertain economic outlook together with concerns around the government's fiscal position and autumn Budget saw 'term premia' rise as investors demanded a higher return for holding gilts.
- 2.2.2 The Budget itself was more muted than had been expected. Despite a weak economic outlook, this helped UK markets perform better with gilt yields trending downwards, inflation easing, and expectations for cuts in Bank of England (BoE) Bank Rate increasing. The end of February 2026 saw the start of the war between US/Israel and Iran. The conflict caused oil and other commodity prices to rise sharply as the shipping lanes in the region became effectively closed, restricting global oil supply. At the end of the period, the economic outlook remained highly uncertain in terms of its impact on inflation as well as countries' fiscal and monetary policy conditions around the globe.
- 2.2.3 Prior to the start of the war, headline UK consumer price inflation (CPI) inflation had generally been trending downwards, albeit the 3% in February 2026 was unchanged from January. Core CPI also stayed put at 3.1%. Inflation was expected to fall further over the coming months to the BoE's 2% target, but the war changed this. Inflation is now expected to rise again, but how quickly and by how much depends on the duration of the war and how long commodity prices are elevated
- 2.2.4 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported the UK economy expanded by 0.1% in Q4 2025. This followed previous modest gains of 0.2% in Q2 and by 0.1% in Q3. Of the subsequent monthly figures, the ONS estimated that GDP showed no growth in January 2026. As this is from before the war started the impact on growth will not be seen formally in the data for a couple more months.
- 2.2.5 While the most recent labour market figures were slightly better than expected, the general trend has been one of persistent weakness. In the three months to January 2026, the unemployment rate rose to 5.2% (from 5.1%), while the employment rate held at 75.1%. Despite inflation being expected to rise in the coming months, labour market conditions remain loose and so any upward pressure on wages from general inflation is likely to be tempered by the weaker labour market environment.
- 2.2.6 After cutting Bank Rate to 3.75% in December 2025, the BoE's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted 5-4 to hold rates in February 2026 and then unanimously to do so again in March. Until the war started, financial markets were expecting Bank Rate to be cut to 3.5% at the March meeting. However, the conflict in the Middle East quickly changed this. The MPC noted the risks to both inflation and growth and indicated they could move rates either up or down depending on the conditions. Financial markets quickly responded to this by pricing in rate hikes.
- 2.2.7 Following the March MPC meeting, Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, revised its central interest rate view and now predicts Bank Rate will be held at 3.75%. However, the conflict makes the outlook for rates highly uncertain. In the short-term the risks are to the upside with the chance of higher Bank Rate should the MPC decide it wishes to quickly quash potential second-round effects from higher inflation. Further out, if Bank Rate is hiked quickly, the pace and magnitude of subsequent cuts could take it far lower than was previously

anticipated as policymakers add significant stimulus to a much weaker economic growth outlook.

- 2.2.8 The US Federal Reserve had been cutting rates over the period, reducing Fed Funds Rate target range by 0.25% at its December meeting to 3.50%-3.75%. At the three subsequent meetings, the rate was held at the same range. Policymakers noted that while inflation was elevated, economic activity had been expanding but the war with Iran made the path of monetary policy highly uncertain. Despite this, the Fed still suggested that further rate cuts were likely in 2026 and 2027.
- 2.2.9 The European Central Bank (ECB) has kept its key interest rates on hold since June 2025, maintaining the deposit rate at 2.0% and main refinancing rate at 2.15%. At its March 2026 meeting, the ECB noted the war in the Middle East had significantly increased uncertainty, creating upside risks for inflation and downside risks for growth, leading it to revise up its forecasts accordingly

### Financial Markets

- 2.2.10 After declining sharply early in the financial year following the announcement of US tariffs, sentiment in financial markets had improved, but equity and bond markets remained volatile throughout. However, the latter part of the period was dominated by the US/Israel war with Iran, which saw equity markets fall sharply, and bond yields rise as concerns over the inflationary impact from sharply higher oil and other commodity prices outweighed the flight-to-quality into government bonds often seen in conflicts.
- 2.2.11 Equity markets had been registering gains after the declines during the April sell-off, but the war reversed this and markets saw another sharp drawdown. Both the FTSE 100 and 250 fell by around 10% over the month from the start of the conflict to the end of the financial year.
- 2.2.12 The period saw significant volatility in gilt yields. The 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started the year at 4.65% and ended at 4.86%. However, over this time the 10-year yield hit a low of 4.23% and a high of 4.95% in the space of a month. It was a similar picture for the 20-year gilt which started at 5.18% and ended at 5.45% with a low and high of 4.92% and 5.55% respectively. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.01% over the 12 months to 31st March 2026.

### Credit Review

- 2.2.13 Arlingclose maintained its recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on most of the banks on its counterparty list at 6 months. The other banks remain on 100 days.
- 2.2.14 Earlier 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. Fitch later upgraded Clydesdale Bank and HSBC, but downgraded Lancashire CC and Close Brothers. Moody's affirmed OP Corporate's rating at Aa3 In May 2025. Later in the period, Moody's upgraded Transport for London, Allied Irish Banks, Bank of Ireland, Toronto-Dominion Bank, DZ Bank, Nordea and HSBC and downgraded Close Brothers. In the last quarter of 2025 S&P upgraded Clydesdale Bank, Allied Irish Banks and Bank of Ireland, and assigned Warrington Council a BBB+ rating.
- 2.2.15 After spiking in April 2025 following the US trade tariff announcements, UK credit default swap (CDS) prices had trended down before picking up modestly in October and November. After declining again in December and into the new calendar year, they rose sharply once again when the war in the Middle East started. They were still elevated at the end of the period, but prices for all banks on Arlingclose's counterparty list remained within limits deemed satisfactory for maintaining credit advice at current durations.

- 2.2.16 Overall, European banks' CDS prices have generally been flatter and lower compared to the UK, as have Singaporean and Australian lenders while some Canadian bank CDS prices have remained elevated since the beginning of the period in part due to ongoing trade tensions with the US. Financial market volatility is expected to remain, and CDS 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 risen to £210.745m by the end of 2025/26 as shown in Table 2.
- 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 2025/26. It also shows the financing 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.

**Table 1 - Balance Sheet Summary**

|                                      | 31 March 2025   | 31 March 2026   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                      | £'000           | £'000           |
| <b>Total CFR</b>                     | <b>559,839</b>  | <b>581,037</b>  |
| Less: Other debt liabilities PFI     | 223,812         | 211,360         |
| <b>Borrowing CFR</b>                 | <b>336,027</b>  | <b>369,677</b>  |
| External borrowing                   | 234,817         | 259,957         |
| <b>Internal borrowing</b>            | <b>101,209</b>  | <b>109,718</b>  |
| Less: Usable Balance Sheet Resources | (124,565)       | (151,091)       |
| Less: Working capital                | (24,230)        | (7,577)         |
| <b>Net Investments</b>               | <b>(47,586)</b> | <b>(48,950)</b> |

- 2.3.4 Table 1 shows the CFR for 2025/26 is £581.037m, an increase of £21.198m compared to £559.839m at the end of 2024/25. The CFR excluding other debt liabilities relating to Private Finance Initiative schemes is forecast at £369.677m an increase of £33.650m compared to the position at the end of 2025/26. The CFR relating to other debt liabilities has reduced by £12.452m to £211.360m and now addresses the implantation of IFRS16 for the second year.
- 2.3.5 The table clearly highlights that the Council borrowing is well below the CFR and the Council is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need (CFR) has not been fully funded with loan debt. 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. This along with raising interest rates for external debt means that the Council will continue to analyse and assess the market to determine the optimum time to externally borrow.

- 2.3.6 The treasury management position as at 31 March 2026 and the change over the year is shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 - Treasury Management Summary**

| Borrowing/Investments                                             | 31 March<br>2025<br>Balance<br>£'000 | Movement<br>£'000 | 31 March<br>2026<br>Balance<br>£'000 | 31 March<br>2026<br>Average<br>Rate % |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Long-term borrowing                                               |                                      |                   |                                      |                                       |
| - Public Works Loan Board                                         | 84,059                               | 30,136            | 114,195                              | 4.06%                                 |
| - Lender Option Borrowing<br>Option                               | 85,500                               | (10,000)          | 75,500                               | 4.33%                                 |
| - Other                                                           | 40,001                               | 1                 | 40,002                               | 4.03%                                 |
| Short-term borrowing                                              | 25,257                               | 5,003             | 30,260                               | 4.84%                                 |
| <b>Total Borrowing</b>                                            | <b>234,817</b>                       | <b>25,140</b>     | <b>259,957</b>                       |                                       |
| Long-term investments                                             | 13,611                               | (1)               | 13,610                               | 4.60%                                 |
| Short-term investments                                            | -                                    | -                 | -                                    |                                       |
| Cash and cash equivalents                                         | 33,975                               | 1,365             | 35,340                               | 4.05%                                 |
| <b>Total Investments</b>                                          | <b>47,586</b>                        | <b>1,364</b>      | <b>48,950</b>                        |                                       |
| <b>Net Borrowing (total borrowing<br/>less total investments)</b> | <b>187,231</b>                       |                   | <b>211,007</b>                       |                                       |

As can be seen in the table above, total borrowing has increased by £25,140m as was expected for both financing requirement and the repayment of LOBO loans called. Longer term borrowing has been secured as well as an increase in short term borrowing. Overall, the level of investments are at a slightly higher level than the prior year at £35.340m.

## **2.4 Borrowing**

- 2.4.1 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.
- 2.4.2 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.
- 2.4.3 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 future.
- 2.4.4 The chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low 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.
- 2.4.5 Gilt yields slightly decreased over most of the period; reflecting expectations of lower interest rates, a tepid economy and to some extent an improvement in the UK governments fiscal position following tax rises in the autumn budget. Subsequent to the war in the Middle East however, gilt yields saw a rapid rise to above the yield at the beginning of the financial year.
- 2.4.6 The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 5.38% at the beginning of the period and 5.72% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity certainty rate was 5.13% and the highest was 5.88%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.71% to 6.37% during the period, and 50-year maturity loans from 5.46% to 6.24%. The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has been similar to or a little above Base Rate for most of the period, with interest rates between 4.0% and 4.5%. However, as is commonly seen, rates rose higher towards the end of the financial year, with rates of 5.0% - 7.0% being seen.

- 2.4.7 As at 31 March 2026 Oldham Council held £259.957m of loans, representing an increase of £25,140m 2025/26. Outstanding loans on 31 March (borrowing position) are summarised in Table 3 below.

**Table 3 - Borrowing Position**

| Borrowing Sources                    | 31 March 2025 Balance<br>£'000 | Movement<br>£'000 | 31 March 2026 Balance<br>£'000 | 31 March 2026 Weighted Average Rate % | 31 March 2026 Weighted Average Maturity (years) |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Public Works Loan Board              | 84,059                         | 30,136            | 114,195                        | 4.06%                                 | 8.72                                            |
| Banks (LOBO)                         | 85,500                         | (10,000)          | 75,500                         | 4.33%                                 | 40.46                                           |
| Banks (fixed-term)                   | 40,000                         | -                 | 40,000                         | 4.03%                                 | 44.40                                           |
| Local Authorities (short-term)       | 25,000                         | 5,000             | 30,000                         | 4.84%                                 | 0.68                                            |
| Local Bonds (long-term)              | 1                              | -                 | 1                              | 4.00%                                 | 0                                               |
| Local Bonds (short-term)             | 22                             | 3                 | 25                             | 4.00%                                 | 0                                               |
| Local Charitable Trusts (short-term) | 235                            | -                 | 235                            | 4.00%                                 | 1.00                                            |
| <b>Total Borrowing</b>               | <b>234,817</b>                 | <b>25,140</b>     | <b>259,957</b>                 |                                       |                                                 |

### **LOBO Loans**

- 2.4.8 Oldham Council held £85.500m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans at the start of the year 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.
- 2.4.9 A total of £29.000m of LOBO loans had annual/semi-annual call option dates during the year, of which £10m were repaid, hence part of the increase in long term PWLB financing.
- 2.4.10 As at 31st March 2026 Oldham Council has £75.500m, LOBO loans and £39.000m with call dates within the next 12 months. Of this sum, £9.000m is held with Dexia Finance over 2 loans, and the remaining £20m is 3 separate loans with three other providers, Danske Bank, Just Retirement and KBC Bank. A Call option for £5m FMS Westmanagement was called on 31st March 2025 with a proposed interest rate of 7.67% and repaid 6/4/2025. A further £5m loan to Dexia was called with a proposed interest rate of 6.70% and was also repaid 23 December 2025. No other LOBO other LOBO loans have been called at the time of writing.
- 2.4.11 Council officers have liaised with treasury management advisors, Arlingclose, over the likelihood of the options being exercised for LOBO's within the loan portfolio. If the option is exercised the Authority plans to repay the loan at no additional cost. If required, the Authority will repay the LOBO loans with available cash or by borrowing from alternative sources or the PWLB, always providing that overall savings can be demonstrated.

## 2.5 Treasury Investment Activity

- 2.5.1 CIPFA published a revised the Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes on 20 December 2021. These define treasury management investments as investments that arise from the organisation'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 At 31 March, the Council held £48.950m invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During 2025/26, the Authority's investment balances ranged between £23.900m and £75.000m 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<br>2025<br>Balance<br>£'000 | Movement<br>£'000 | 31 March<br>2026<br>Balance<br>£'000 | 31 March<br>2026<br>Income<br>Return % |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Money Market Funds       | 33,975                               | 1,365             | 35,340                               | 4.05%                                  |
| Property Pooled Fund     | 13,611                               | (1)               | 13,610                               | 4.60%                                  |
| <b>Total investments</b> | <b>47,586</b>                        | <b>1,364</b>      | <b>48,950</b>                        |                                        |

- 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 to support local public services.
- 2.5.5 Bank Rate reduced from 4.50% to 4.25% in May 2025, followed by a further reduction to 4.00% in August 2025 and 3.75% in December 2025. Short term interest rates have largely followed these levels. The investment we had in DMADF for a short period was 4.21% and money market rates during the year ranged between 3.77% and 4.54%
- 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 generated an average total return of £0.626m, 4.60% income return.
- 2.5.7 UK commercial property experienced a more stable backdrop than in the most difficult period following the sharp rise in yields in 2022 and 2023. Lower interest rate expectations and a firmer tone in markets for much of the year helped support valuations, although capital values were broadly flat overall. Income remained the main driver of returns, with rental income providing a relatively resilient contribution. However, as with other asset classes, the environment became more uncertain towards the end of the period. The combination of this has had a neutral effect on the value of CCLA Fund since March 2025 as demonstrated in capital values and income returns over the year to 31 March is shown in Table 4.

- 2.5.8 The Council's investments have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, but their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's medium- to long-term investment objectives are regularly reviewed. Strategic fund investments are made in the knowledge that capital values will move both up and down on months, quarters and even years; but with the confidence that over a three to five-year period total returns will exceed cash interest rates.

#### Statutory Override

- 2.5.9 Further to consultations in April 2023 and December 2024 MHCLG 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 1st April 2029 for investments already in place before 1st April 2024. The Council had set up a provision of £2m to mitigate the impact of the statutory override not being extended. In view of the fact that the override may not be extended past 2009 the Council has, currently, 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 Team Performance**

|                                  | Budgeted Performance Rates / Benchmark SONIA Return % | Benchmark SONIA Return % Plus 5% | Actual Return |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
|                                  |                                                       |                                  | %             |
| Budgeted Annual Investment Rates | 4.50%                                                 |                                  | 4.20%         |
| Overnight SONIA                  | 4.10%                                                 | 4.31%                            | 4.01%         |

- 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 a number of interest rate reduction to take place during 2025/26. The total budgeted for Treasury Management Income for 2025/26 was £1m and the actual outturn of Treasury Management Income to General fund was £1.9m
- 2.6.3 Previously the benchmark return was measured on the London Interbank Bid Rate (LIBID) which was a forward-looking interest rate. The Bank of England replaced LIBID with SONIA in December 2021. SONIA is calculated differently to LIBID in that it is a backward looking rate, based on actual results. The benchmark of SONIA plus 5% has not been achieved however the actual rate achieved for overnight investments over the year is higher than the average SONIA rate over the period.

- 2.6.4 The Director of Finance reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the year complied fully with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Council'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 31/3/205 £'000 | Maximum Allowable in 2025/26 £'000 | Compliance Yes/No |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Any single organisation, except the UK Government   | 10,000                       | -                                 | 30,000                             | Yes               |
| Any group of organisations under the same ownership | 10,000                       | -                                 | 20,000                             | Yes               |
| Any group of pooled funds under the same management | 13,611                       | 13,611                            | 15,000                             | Yes               |
| Unsecured investments with building societies       | -                            | -                                 | 20,000                             | Yes               |
| Money Market Funds                                  | 75,000                       | 33,975                            | 80,000                             | Yes               |
| Strategic Pooled Funds                              | 13,611                       | 13,610                            | 15,000                             | Yes               |

- 2.6.5 Compliance with the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for external debt is demonstrated in Table 7 below.

**Table 7 – Debt and the Authorised Limit & Operational Boundary**

|                        | Maximum borrowing in year £000 | 31.03.26 Actual £000 | 2025/26 Operational Boundary £000 | 2025/26 Authorised Limit £000 | Complied? Yes/No |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Borrowing              | 259,956                        | 259,956              | 356,000                           | 371,000                       | Yes              |
| PFI and Finance Leases | 211,360                        | 211,360              | 230,250                           | 235,250                       | Yes              |
| <b>Total debt</b>      | <b>471,316</b>                 | <b>471,316</b>       | <b>586,250</b>                    | <b>606,250</b>                |                  |

- 2.6.6 The Operational Boundary represents the expected borrowing position for the Council for the year and was set at £586,250k.
- 2.6.7 The Authorised Limit is the “affordable borrowing limit” required by Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and for 2025/26 was set at £606,250k, once this has been set, the Council does not have the power to borrow above this level although it can be revised if required.
- 2.6.8 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. Debt has not been above Operational Boundary during 2025/26.

## 2.7 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

2.7.1 As required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Authority monitors and measures the following treasury management prudential indicators.

### Liability Benchmark

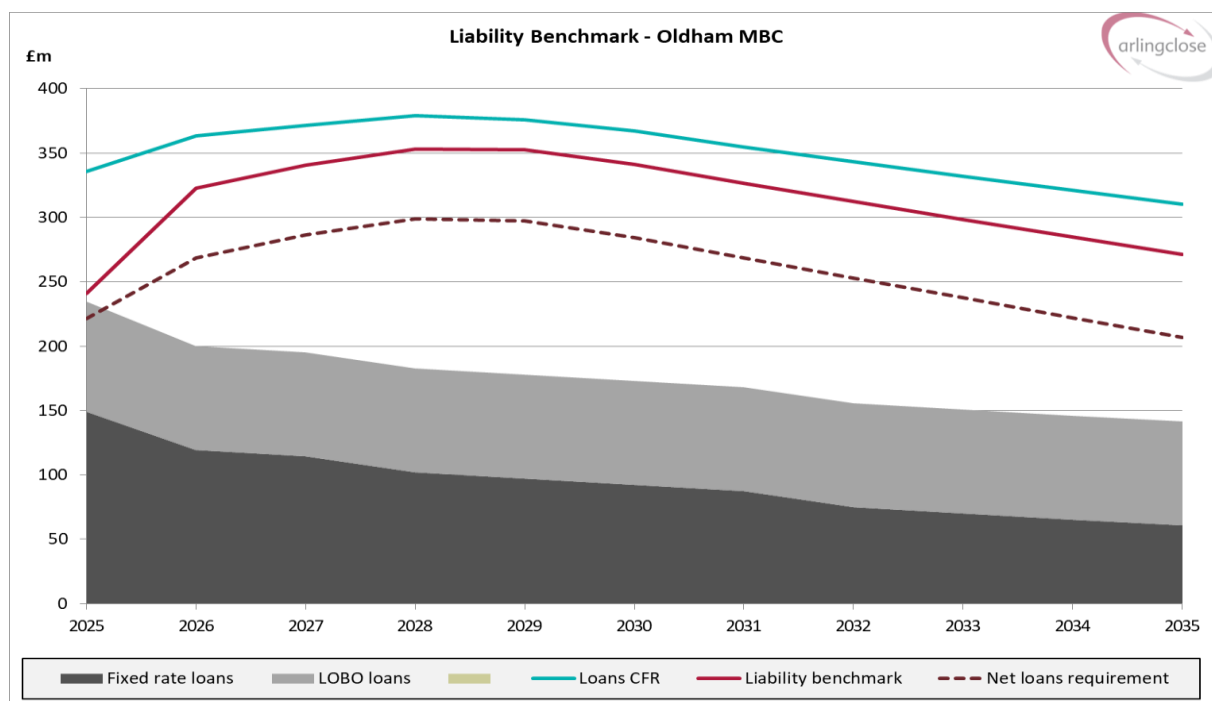
2.7.2 This new indicator compares the Authority's actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term 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 8 - Liability Benchmark**

|                                  | 31.3.25<br>£000 | 31.3.26<br>Actual<br>£000 | 31 March<br>2027<br>Forecast<br>£000 | 31March<br>2028<br>Forecast<br>£000 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Loans CFR                        | 336,027         | 369,677                   | 376,253                              | 379,116                             |
| Less: Balance sheet<br>resources | 148,795         | 158,668                   | 129,936                              | 134,936                             |
| <b>Net loans requirement</b>     | <b>187,232</b>  | <b>211,009</b>            | <b>246,317</b>                       | <b>244,180</b>                      |
| Plus: Liquidity allowance        | 20,000          | 20,000                    | 20,000                               | 20,000                              |
| <b>Liability benchmark</b>       | <b>207,232</b>  | <b>231,009</b>            | <b>266,317</b>                       | <b>264,180</b>                      |
| <b>Existing borrowing</b>        | <b>234,817</b>  | <b>259,957</b>            | <b>202,240</b>                       | <b>200,741</b>                      |

2.7.3 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.

- 2.7.4 Following on from the medium-term forecast above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing. Minimum Revenue Provision on new capital expenditure is forecast based on a 25 year asset life. This is shown in the chart below together with the maturity profile of the Authority's existing borrowing.



- 2.7.5 Table 9 below sets out the maturity structure of borrowing at the end of 2025/26 compared to the upper and lower limits set in the Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26.

**Table 9 - Maturity Structure of Borrowing**

| Borrowing Timeframe            | Upper Limit | Lower Limit | 31 March 2025 Actual | Compliance Yes/No |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Under 12 months                | 35%         | 0%          | 29.94%               | Yes               |
| 12 months and within 24 months | 35%         | 0%          | 12.51%               | Yes               |
| 24 months and within 5 years   | 35%         | 0%          | 22.15%               | Yes               |
| 5 years and within 10 years    | 35%         | 0%          | 12.91%               | Yes               |
| 10 years to 20 years           | 50%         | 0%          | 1.87%                | Yes               |
| 20 years to 30 years           | 50%         | 0%          | 3.75%                | Yes               |
| 30 years to 40 years           | 50%         | 0%          | 1.87%                | Yes               |
| 40 years to 50 years           | 50%         | 0%          | 7.50%                | Yes               |
| 50 years to 60 years           | 50%         | 0%          | 7.50%                | Yes               |

- 2.7.6 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.

## Long-term Treasury Management Investments

- 2.7.7 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 10- 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           |

- 2.7.8 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 the Audit Committee has no option other than to consider and approve the contents of the report. Therefore, no options/alternatives have been presented.

### **4 Preferred Option**

- 4.1 The preferred option is that the contents of the report are agreed and recommended to Council for approval.

### **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 presentation of the Treasury Management Outturn Report to the Cabinet for detailed scrutiny on 7 September 2026 will be in compliance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice. The report will then be presented to the Scrutiny Board in line with the Council's Constitution.

### **6 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 All included within the report.

### **7 Legal Services Comments**

- 7.1 None.

## **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, including crime and disorder in accordance with section17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

- 15.1 None.

## **16 Oldham Equality Impact Assessments, including implications for Children and Young People**

- 16.1 Not Applicable

## **17 Key Decision**

- 17.1 Yes

## **18 Key Decision Reference**

- 18.1 FCR-20-26

## **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

## **20 Appendix 1 - Prudential and Treasury Indicators**

## Appendix 1 - Prudential and Treasury Indicators

The following tables show a summary of the prudential indicators for 2025/26.

### Capital Expenditure

| Capital Expenditure/Financing    | 2024/25<br>Actual<br>£'000 | 2025/26<br>Actual<br>£'000 | 2026/27<br>Budget<br>£'000 | 2027/28<br>Budget<br>£'000 |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Expenditure</b>               |                            |                            |                            |                            |
| General Fund services            | 81,790                     | 71,913                     | 99,016                     | 44,460                     |
| HRA                              | 1                          | 212                        | 6,189                      | 3,849                      |
| <b>Total Capital Expenditure</b> | <b>81,791</b>              | <b>72,125</b>              | <b>105,205</b>             | <b>48,309</b>              |
|                                  |                            |                            |                            |                            |
| <b>Financing</b>                 |                            |                            |                            |                            |
| Grants & Contributions           | (27,774)                   | (44,744)                   | (62,596)                   | (31,662)                   |
| Prudential Borrowing             | (47,337)                   | (20,333)                   | (35,394)                   | (13,746)                   |
| Revenue                          | (13)                       | (54)                       | (3,050)                    | (0)                        |
| Capital Receipts                 | (6,667)                    | (6,994)                    | (4,164)                    | (2,900)                    |
| <b>Total Financing</b>           | <b>(81,791)</b>            | <b>(72,125)</b>            | <b>(105,204)</b>           | <b>(48,308)</b>            |

### Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

| Capital Financing Requirement | 31 March<br>2024<br>Actual<br>£'000 | 31 March<br>2026<br>Actual<br>£'000 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| General Fund Services         | 559,839                             | 581,037                             |
| <b>Total CFR</b>              | <b>559,839</b>                      | <b>581,037</b>                      |

### Gross Borrowing and the Capital Financing Requirement

| Gross Borrowing / CFR                | 31 March<br>2025<br>£'000 | 31 March<br>2026<br>£'000 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Gross Borrowing (incl. PFI & leases) | 458,630                   | 471,316                   |
| Capital Financing Requirement        | 559,839                   | 581,037                   |

## Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

| Debt                   | Debt at 31 March 2026<br>£'000 | 2025/26 Operational Boundary<br>£'000 | 2025/26 Authorised Limit<br>£'000 | Compliance? Yes/No |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Borrowing              | 259,956                        | 356,000                               | 371,000                           | Yes                |
| PFI and Finance Leases | 211,360                        | 230,250                               | 235,250                           | Yes                |
| <b>Total Debt</b>      | <b>471,316</b>                 | <b>586,250</b>                        | <b>606,250</b>                    |                    |

## Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

| Financing Cost/Net to Revenue Stream | 2024/25<br>£'000 | 2025/26<br>£'000 |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Financing costs (£m)                 | 26,525           | 27,027           |
| Proportion of net revenue stream     | 7.61%            | 7.82%            |



**Report to COUNCIL**

## **Ensuring Statutory Scrutiny and Enforceability for Places for Everyone Masterplans**

**Officer Contact:** Emma Barton, Executive Director of Place  
(Deputy Chief Executive)

**Report Author:** Peter Richards, Assistant Director for Planning & Development

**Email:** [peter.richards@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:peter.richards@oldham.gov.uk)

**16 September 2026**

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### **Reason for Decision**

To report back to Council on the matters covered in the Motion agreed at Council in December 2025 on Ensuring Statutory Scrutiny and Enforceability for Places for Everyone Masterplans.

### **Recommendations**

That council note the contents of this report and that it will no longer be possible to adopt Supplementary Planning Documents for Masterplans for Places for Everyone allocations.

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## Ensuring Statutory Scrutiny and Enforceability for Places for Everyone Masterplans

### 1 Background

1.1 At Council on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025, the following motion was proposed and agreed:

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.

- 1.2 Subsequent to this officers provided an updated timetable for the preparation of an SPD for the Beal Valley-Broadbent Moss Masterplan to Cabinet for their meeting on 15 December 2025, as follows:

| Approval stage                                   | Date                      |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Preparation of SPD and any associated appraisals | January / February 2026   |
| Cabinet (approval to consult)                    | 23 March 2026             |
| Pre-Election Period                              | 26 March – 7 May          |
| Consultation                                     | 15 May to 14 June 2026    |
| Review of Feedback and Refining SPD              | June / July 2026          |
| Summer Recess                                    | August 2026               |
| Place Scrutiny                                   | September 2026 (date tbc) |
| Cabinet (adoption)                               | September 2026 (date tbc) |

- 1.3 Notwithstanding this timetable, officers were able to prepare the SPD quickly enough to hold the consultation earlier, and approval was granted by [Cabinet on 23 February 2026](#) to consult on the draft SPD. Consultation on the [draft SPD](#) was then carried out between Wednesday 25 February 2026 to 12 noon on Monday 30 March 2026.
- 1.4 Following the public consultation, officers worked towards refining and finalising the Masterplan SPD with the intention of bringing the final SPD for adoption to Cabinet at the first available opportunity after the local elections, which would have been June. Unfortunately, some of the matters that needed to be addressed could not be done within that short timescale, and so the SPD was not ready for a Cabinet report in June.
- 1.5 In the meantime, on 2 March 2026, the Government explicitly confirmed in the explanatory notes for the [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 \(Commencement No. 11 and Saving and Transitional Provisions\) Regulations 2026](#) that, whilst transitional arrangements were put in place for existing SPDs to continue to be used as planning policy as England moves to a new-style Local Plan system, no further supplementary planning documents could be adopted after 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026. This reflects that going forward, SPDs will no longer form part of the new plan-making system that is being introduced.

## 2 Current Position

- 2.1 As a result of the transitional arrangements for the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, no SPDs can be pursued and adopted for the Beal-Valley-Broadbent Moss Masterplan or any other PfE allocation, and the resolution by Council in December 2025 cannot now be fulfilled.
- 2.2 Officers will continue to work with developers and promoters to prepare Masterplans, where the PfE policies require it, to guide development on PfE allocations, including utilising the already endorsed Masterplan for Beal Valley-Broadbent Moss. In this way, the development of the allocations will continue to come forward in accordance with PfE policy and in a co-ordinated manner that seeks to deliver high quality development and the necessary infrastructure needed to support the new development.

- 
- 2.3 Those Masterplans will not have the status of an SPD, but they will still be able to be material considerations in the decision-making process for planning applications on those allocations, as originally intended. As such, the council is recommended to note the above and that it will no longer be possible to adopt Supplementary Planning Documents for Masterplans for Places for Everyone allocations.
- 3 **Options/Alternatives**
- 3.1 There are no options or alternatives for this report – council is simply asked to note that the original intention of the Motion of Council from December 2025 can no longer be fulfilled due to changes in the Planning system at a national level.
- 4 **Preferred Option**
- 4.1 The council is asked to note the contents of this report and that it will no longer be possible to adopt Supplementary Planning Documents for Masterplans for Places for Everyone allocations.
- 5 **Consultation**
- 5.1 N/A
- 6 **Financial Implications**
- 6.1 There are no financial implications of this report.
- 7 **Legal Implications**
- 7.1 The report outlines the impact of the transitional provisions introduced under the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (Commencement No. 11 and Saving and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2026, which prevent the adoption of new Supplementary Planning Documents after 30 June 2026. As a result, the Council is no longer able to implement the December 2025 resolution insofar as it required the Beal Valley-Broadbent Moss Masterplan, and future Places for Everyone masterplans, to be adopted as SPDs. Any masterplans prepared going forward will need to be considered and utilised through alternative planning mechanisms and may still be capable of being material considerations in planning decision-making where relevant. The report is for noting only.  
(Alex Bougatef – Director of Legal, Monitoring Officer)
8. **Procurement Implications**
- 8.1 There are no procurement implications of this report.
- 9 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**
- 9.1 No – given the report is only noting a change to the Planning system at national level that means the status of Masterplans on PfE allocations can no longer be as SPDs, there are no impacts on equality.
- 10 **Background Papers**
- 10.1 None
- 11 **Appendices**
- 13.1 None
-



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## **Report to COUNCIL**

# **Oldham Children, Young People and Families Plan 2026-27**

**Officer Contact:** Julie Daniels, Executive Director Children and Young People

**Report Author:** Sheila Garara, Assistant Director Children's Services Integration  
**Email:** [Sheila.garara@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:Sheila.garara@oldham.gov.uk)

**16 September 2026**

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## **Reason for Decision**

The Children and Young People Strategic Plan forms part of the Council's Policy Framework and, in accordance with the Constitution, requires approval by Full Council. Adoption of the Plan will provide a strategic framework for improving outcomes for children and young people, support delivery of the Council's priorities, and ensure a coordinated approach across partner organisations.

## **Executive Summary**

Under Part 2: Article 4 of the Article of the Constitution, Council is required to approve the Children and Young People Strategic Plan.

The Oldham Children, Young People and Families Plan 2026-27 sets out the strategic direction for the children and young people directorate.

## **Recommendation**

That Council approves the Oldham Children, Young People and Families Plan 2026-27 detailed in Appendix 1.

## **Oldham Children, Young People and Families Plan 2026-27**

### **1 Background**

- 1.1 Under Part 2: Article 4 of the Article of the Constitution, Council is required to approve the Children and Young People Strategic Plan.
- 1.2 The Oldham Children, Young People and Families Plan 2026-27 sets out the strategic direction for the children and young people directorate, taking a partnership approach to achieving our ambition and outcomes so that Oldham is a community where children, young people and families thrive and lead healthier, happier lives.
- 1.3 The plan has been developed based on local management information and performance and quality assurance data and intelligence and is in line with the needs of children, young people and families in Oldham.

### **2 Current Position**

- 2.1 The plan has been considered by Julie Daniels, Executive Director Children and Young People and the independently chaired Achieving Excellence Board and the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 2.2 The plan outlines across Children's Social Care and Early Help and Education, Early Years, and SEND the key strategic priorities (4 P's), reform, change and improvement programmes and Key Performance Indicators (as reported in the quarterly Corporate Performance Report).
- 2.3 Service leaders and the workforce continue to have a relentless focus on providing timely, high-quality support and intervention work with children, young people, and families, and are driving ambitious and innovative transformation and reform within a culture of continuous learning and improvement.
- 2.4 Council-wide strategies with an increased focus on early intervention and prevention in local communities seeks to address the high levels of demand for statutory services. Additionally, through the continued delivery of this plan, Children and Young People Services in Oldham are keeping children and young people safe, improving outcomes and are in a strong position to further improve the delivery of timely and effective services to children, young people and their families.
- 2.5 Progress of the plan will be monitored by the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board.

---

### **3 Options/Alternatives**

- 3.1 As it is outlined in the Article of the Constitution Policy Framework, it is not possible to provide an alternative option to this plan.

### **4 Preferred Option**

- 4.1 To approve the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2026-27.

### **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 The directorate workforce and children, young people and their families have been consulted in the formulation of this plan, through activity within existing quality assurance and participation arrangements.

### **6 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2026-27. (Nicola Harrop – Finance Manager)

### **7 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 Part 2, Article 4 of the Constitution (4.4.1) requires this report to be approved by Full Council as it forms part of the Council's policy framework. The report explains that this plan is important to help the Council improve the outcomes of children and young people within the Borough in particular those working with Children's Social Care and Early Help and Education, Early Years, and SEND.  
(Alex Bougatef- Director of Legal, Monitoring Officer)

### **8. Procurement Implications**

- 8.1 No immediate procurement implications contained in this paper. Procurement will continue to support where required. James England – Procurement Manager

### **9 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

- 9.1 Not required as the recommended option is for services to continue.

### **10 Key Decision**

- 10.1 No

### **11 Key Decision Reference**

- 11.1 N/A

### **12 Background Papers**

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12.1 None

13 **Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1 – Oldham Children, Young People and Families Plan 2026-27

# Achieving Excellence Children, Young People and Families Plan 2026 -27

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## Our Vision



**Oldham: A community where children, young people, and families thrive**

We want all children and young people to have a safe, happy, and healthy life and access to a great education giving them the best possible start in life. We want to be the best borough for children and young people and the staff and services that work with them.

Children's Services make the commitment to:

- Putting children and young people first
- Supporting families and protecting vulnerable children and young people
- Working together as one team close to our community
- Providing great public value and confidence
- Listening and engaging
- Creating an inclusive and empowering environment

## Strategies and Plans

The following strategies and plans describe the priorities across the children and young people directorate and wider partnership.

- ✓

The Oldham plan

✓

Corporate plan
- ✓

Achieving Excellence strategy
- ✓

Education strategy
- ✓

Corporate parenting strategy
- ✓

SEND and Inclusion strategy
- ✓

Early Help strategy
- ✓

Participation strategy
- ✓

Oldham Youth Justice Plan
- ✓

Employment and Skills Strategy

## Business Priorities

### Children's Social Care and Early Help



## Partnership Principles

- Reduce poverty and drive equality.
- Co-production and co-design of services with children, young people, and families.
- Earlier help to meet families' needs.
- Encourage family self-help and resilience.
- Digital delivery, advice, and guidance.
- Relational, strength-based practice, asset based, whole family support.

## Governance

We operate in a complex multi-agency environment where many partners have their own governance and oversight arrangements. To navigate this, the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership oversees the breadth of services contributing to outcomes for children and young people.



## Key Risks

- Adequate resources in the Education and Social Care system to manage and reduce demand and maintain/improve statutory quality and performance.
- Partner responsibility at the appropriate level across the partnership.
- Budget overspends due to rise due to levels of demand.

### Education, Early Years, SEND and Inclusion



# Children and Young People Change Portfolio

The following are the transformation and change programmes that we are delivering with partners. The Children's Transformation Board, SEND Local Improvement Partnership Executive Board and Oldham Learning Partnership oversee the delivery of the change portfolio, as well as a number of service improvements programmes which are focused on delivering good services, financial sustainability and implementation of national reforms, through strong co-production, to improve outcomes for Oldham's children and young people and their families.

## Quality support at the earliest opportunity

### Change Activity:

#### Early Help:

- Best Start Family Hubs
- Integrated Children and Families Service (Health)
- Universal partners
- District multi-disciplinary teams
- Community resilience
- Comprehensive Youth Work offer

### Impact:

- Universal services without the need for targeted family help and specialist SEND services.
- The right support at the right time for vulnerable families in the heart of our communities – universal services, and online advice and guidance.
- More accessible multi-agency support for families.

## Children's Social Care and Early Help

### Change Activity:

- Integrated Family Help - Targeted Early Help and Child in Need
- Strengthening Family Networks supported by Family Group Conferencing
- Multi-agency child protection teams
- Targeted Edge of Care
- Specialist Foster Care
- Semi-independent and independent living
- Council run children's homes
- More foster carers and kinship carers
- Commissioning and market management
- Workforce stability

### Impact:

- Multi-agency management of services to be more responsive to needs.
- A safe, stable, happy home for every child and young person in care.
- More Oldham children and young people live in Oldham.
- Fewer children coming into care for less time.
- Reduced placement costs.
- Oldham as an employer of choice.
- Stable workforce and managers drive practice improvement that improves outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, and families.
- Sustained low use of agency workers.

## SEND & inclusion

### Change Activity:

- Consistent communication and co-production with children, young people and families.
- Early identification and SEN support
- Health and wellbeing
- Community and social inclusion
- Joint commissioning for sufficiency of specialist support and provision
- Preparing for adulthood - transition readiness
- Speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) and neurodevelopmental (ND) models
- More additional resourced provision
- Local reforms plan
- EHCP annual reviews
- Data maturity and quality assurance

### Impact:

- Children and young people with SEND are safe, healthy, happy, and supported to have opportunities to achieve their potential and be confident communicators having an active voice in their community.
- Waiting time for SaLT and mental health services reduced.
- High quality Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs).

## Education and Early Years

### Change Activity:

- School and setting attendance and inclusion
- Best Start in Life
- Mental and physical health and wellbeing
- Quality of Education across all phases
- Post-16 opportunities

### Impact:

- Solid foundations for health and development and school readiness.
- Children and young people reach their full potential, are supported with their future aspirations, and prepared for adulthood.
- High quality schools and settings in Oldham.
- Every learning setting is inclusive.
- Close the gaps in attainment across the borough and to national comparators.
- Reduction in behavioural difficulties and mental health needs.
- More job opportunities and lower NEET.

# Children and Young People Key Performance Indicators

## Children's Social Care and Early Help:

Targets

### Help and Protection

85%

- Early Help – Children in families closed with all issues addressed (excludes worklessness)

26%

- Child protection plans starting which were a second or subsequent plan

20%

- Referrals which are repeat referrals to Children's Social Care

Stat Neigh 47.4

- Rate of Child Protection Plans per 10,000 children aged under 18 years

Stat Neigh 537.8

- Rate of referrals into Children's Social Care per 10,000 children aged under 18 years

#### Youth Justice

National 199

- Children entering the criminal justice system (first time entrants)

National 3.79

- Re-offending rate for children involved in the criminal justice system

National 0.14

- Custody rate for children

#### Youth Service

8000 annually

- Engagements (visits) to Outdoor Education and Environmental Services (OES) provision

500 annually

- OES sessions delivered

2000 annually

- Youth work sessions delivered

3000 annually

- Individual young people engaged with youth service

### Corporate Parenting

68%

- Children Looked After in long term stable placements

63% (17-18)  
48% (19-21)

- Care Leavers aged 17-18 and 19-21 in Education, Employment or Training

5%

- Care leavers in unsuitable accommodation aged 17-18 and 19-21

55%

- Children Looked After placed within in-house provision

90%

- Children Looked After with an up-to-date annual health assessment

10%

- Children Looked After with three or more placement moves in the last 12 months

95%

- Children Looked After that have a permanence plan recorded at second review

Stat Neigh 95.8

- Rate of Children Looked After per 10,000 children aged under 18 years

### Workforce

17

- Average number of cases per social worker

20%

- Agency Social Workers in Children's Social Care

Stat Neigh 11.8%

- Registered social worker turnover

# Children and Young People Key Performance Indicators

## Education, Early Years, SEND and Inclusion:

Targets

### Education

- 2% • 16 to 17 year olds destination lapsed/unknown
- 3.5% • 16 to 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training
- 97% (reception)  
93% (yr 7) • Children receiving 1-3 school place preference in reception
- Stat Neigh 43.5 • Children receiving 1-3 school place preference in year 7
- Stat Neigh  
KS2 60.9%  
KS4 39.8%  
KS5 • Attainment 8 score at end of KS4
- KS2, KS4 and KS5 outcomes – all pupils, CLA and SEND

### Early Years

- Stat Neigh 64.4% • Early Years Foundation Stage: Children reaching a good level of development
- 86% • Early learning for two-year-olds take up rate
- 90% • Early learning for 3- and 4-year-olds take up rate

### SEND & Inclusion

- 80% • SEND EHC plans completed within 20 weeks timescale
- 70% • Annual EHCP (SEND) statutory reviews completed within timescale
- National 0.01% • Permanent exclusions in primary schools
- National 0.1% • Permanent exclusions in secondary schools
- National 0.9% • Fixed term suspensions in primary schools
- National 7.8% • Fixed term suspensions in secondary schools
- National 4.3% • Fixed term suspensions of pupils with SEND in primary schools.
- National 21% • Fixed term suspensions of pupils with SEND in secondary schools.
- National 94.8% • Attendance rates in Oldham primary schools
- National 91.9% • Attendance rates in Oldham secondary schools

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## Report to COUNCIL

# Oldham Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2026-27

**Officer Contact:** Julie Daniels, Executive Director Children and Young People

**Report Author:** Clare Griffiths, Head of Oldham Youth Justice Service

**Email:** [claregriffiths@positive-steps.org.uk](mailto:claregriffiths@positive-steps.org.uk)

**16 September 2026**

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### Reason for Decision

Youth Justice Plans, in England only, must be signed off by the full council in accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'. The plan provides the strategic framework for the delivery of youth justice services and supports the Council's statutory responsibilities in relation to children and young people who offend or are at risk of offending.

### Executive Summary

Local authority partnerships have a statutory duty to submit a youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice service. Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth justice partnership's responsibilities in producing a plan.

The Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan 2026-27 sets out how the service will be provided and funded, how it will operate and what functions will be carried out to prevent and reduce offending.

### Recommendations

That Council approves the Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan 2026-27 detailed in Appendix 1.

**Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan 2026-27****1 Background**

- 1.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services. Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth justice partnership's responsibilities in producing a plan. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out.
- 1.2 The Oldham Youth Justice Plan sets out the strategic direction for youth justice in Oldham, taking a partnership approach to reducing re-offending, reducing the number of first time entrants into the criminal justice system and reducing the use of custody.
- 1.3 The plan has been developed based on local management information and performance data and is in line with the needs of children, young people and families in Oldham.
- 1.4 There is acknowledgment that the plan is significant in length. However, this is dictated by the template provided by the national Youth Justice Board. The Service Delivery Plan can be found in Appendix 4 of the embedded Youth Justice Plan in Appendix 1.

**2 Current Position**

- 2.1 The plan has been considered by Julie Daniels, Executive Director Children and Young People and the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board.
- 2.2 Progress of the plan will be monitored through the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board on a quarterly basis.
- 2.3 Oldham Youth Justice Service is a high performing service who lead the way in re-offending rates and use of custody among comparative groups. We pride ourselves on a child-first approach to provide positive outcomes for children, young people and families through innovative practice. This plan seeks to continue to build on current performance and achieve a positive inspection outcome for the service.

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### **3 Options/Alternatives**

- 3.1 As it is a statutory duty for the local authority, it is not possible to provide an alternative option to this plan. Each youth justice service must have an annual plan in place, in this format, as part of the requirements of the youth justice core grant.

### **4 Preferred Option**

- 4.1 To approve the Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan 2026-27

### **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 The Youth Justice Partnership Management Board and children working with Oldham Youth Justice Service were consulted in the formulation of this plan.

### **6 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with the Oldham Youth Justice Plan 2026-27. (Nicola Harrop – Finance Manager)

### **7 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 As the report highlights, S.40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires each local authority to formulate and implement each year a plan and Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and responsibilities) (England) regulations 2000 outlines that it must be approved by Full Council. Our constitution outlines this requirement at Part 2, Article 4 (4.4.1). It is therefore a statutory requirement that this plan is approved by Full Council. (Alex Bougatef – Director of Legal, Monitoring Officer).

### **8. Procurement Implications**

- 8.1 No immediate procurement implications contained in this paper. Procurement will continue to support where required. James England – Procurement Manager

### **9 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

- 9.1 Not required as the recommended option is for services to continue.

### **10 Key Decision**

- 10.1 No.

### **11 Key Decision Reference**

- 11.1 N/A.

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12      **Background Papers**

12.1    None

13      **Appendices**

13.1    Appendix 1 - Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan 2026-27.

**Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan**  
**2026 – 2027**

**Head of Service – Clare Griffiths**

**Chair of Youth Justice Partnership Management Board – Julie Daniels, Executive Director Children and Young People**  
Oldham Council

**1. Introduction, vision and strategy**

Oldham is one of ten boroughs in Greater Manchester. It is a complex and challenging area to deliver youth justice, with, according to 2021 Census Data, a population of 242, 100, a figure which represents an overall growth rate of 7.3% within the last 10 years. Of this, 54, 800 children live in Oldham and this figure continues to rise. While a youthful population undoubtedly has many advantages, the impact on services, education and employment cannot be ignored. Adding to this, while the borough has pockets of prosperity, the English Indices of Deprivation shows levels in Oldham are ranked amongst the highest in the country- 19 out of 317 Local Authorities. Further analysis evidences that several wards are placed within the bottom 1% nationally in terms of income deprivation amongst children.

The ethnic composition of Oldham is more diverse than both Greater Manchester and England as a whole. In 2021, Oldham's largest population was White (68.1%) with the largest ethnic minorities being Pakistani (13.5%) and Bangladeshi (9%). A significant increase in non- white residents was observed (31.9% compared to 22.5% in 2011). This diversity is a strength to be valued, celebrated and promoted, although discrimination and disadvantages continue to be an experience of some.

Oldham is in a unique position in that it is one of the only areas in England and Wales whereby the Statutory Youth Justice Service (YJS) is commissioned by the local authority and delivered by a charitable trust, Positive Steps. Positive Steps delivers a range of services, including Education Advice and Guidance; Early Intervention and Prevention (Early Help); Oldham Young Carers; National Probation Service Welfare Hub; Missing from Home Return Interview Service; and Positive Futures Alternative Provision. As such, children, families and adults can access an integrated, holistic and non- stigmatizing offer, delivered from our modern base in Oldham Town Centre, as well as in community hubs across the borough. Furthermore, this arrangement allows for innovation and

creativity through the ability to access a range of additional funding streams to provide added value and to lead practice in specific areas.

This plan has been written in accordance with The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and national guidance from the Youth Justice Board, following consultation with the Oldham Youth Justice Partnership Management Board (YJPMB); YJS practitioners; and children with lived experience and their parents and carers. This plan seeks to inform you of the strategic direction of the service and outlines how it will achieve its primary functions of:

- Reducing the number of first-time entrants (FTE) into the criminal justice system
- Reducing re-offending by children subject to statutory court orders or out of court resolutions (OOCR)
- Reducing the use of custody for children

While additionally:

- Effectively safeguarding the children we work with
- Effectively protecting the public from harm
- Enhancing the voice and experience of victims of crime committed by children

The Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan is not an isolated initiative, but part of the broader Oldham Children, Young People and Families Plan with a shared vision:

“Oldham: A community where children, young people and families thrive”

## **2. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements**

Positive Steps is governed through a Board of Trustees which is comprised of elected members and community representatives. In 2025, the board introduced mandatory reporting on delivery, performance and risk for each service area, to highlight impact and allow for challenge at an organizational level.

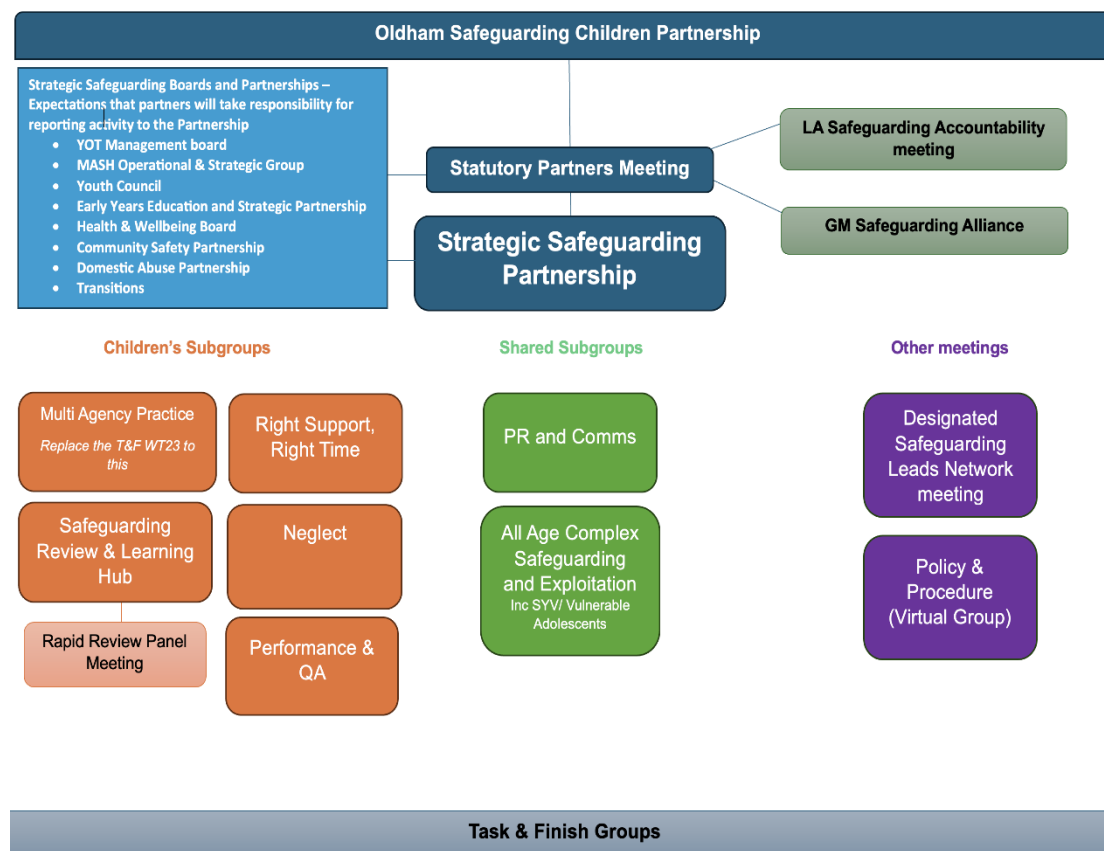
In its own right, Oldham YJS meets statutory requirements and maintains oversight from the local authority through the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board, chaired by the Executive Director, Children and Young People, who reports to the Chief Executive of Oldham Council.

Working with the Executive Director, Children and Young People is the Head of Service for Youth Justice and Missing from home, who reports to the Chief Executive of Positive Steps. Alongside this, they are also the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Positive Steps.

As a multi- agency team, Oldham YJS has in place specialists through partnership arrangements to provide support to children working with the service. This includes a seconded Police Officer (1 FTE); CAMHS Practitioner (0.7 FTE); Speech and Language Therapist (0.7 FTE) and School Nurse (0.7 FTE). In 2026, Oldham YJS and Tameside, Oldham, Glossop and Stockport Mind are entering into the fourth year of a partnership project in which an Emotional Wellbeing Coach is seconded into the service. The staffing structure of the workforce available to deliver youth justice can be found in Appendix 1. Ethnicity sex and known disability of the workforce is contained within Appendix 2.

In recognition that to affect change, collaboration, grounded in positive relationships, is key, the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board has all statutory partners represented from Oldham Council; Greater Manchester Police; health; education; and Probation; alongside local agencies and the voluntary, community and faith sector. Quarterly meetings ensure that the Board is pro-active in taking responsibility for all aspects of youth justice, leading strategically, and providing oversight, to ensure a high-quality service is provided to all children. The full structure of the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board can be found in Appendix 3.

The Oldham Youth Justice Partnership Management Board is part of the Oldham Safeguarding Children's Partnership who oversee the effectiveness of multi- agency arrangements with the shared aims of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.



There is a strong tradition of partnership working in Oldham and as such, Oldham Youth Justice Service is engaged with the relevant boards and strategic subgroups including; Corporate Parenting Partnership; Children's Assurance Board; Oldham Reducing Re- Offending Board (Co- Chair); Oldham Performance Subgroup; Oldham Review and Learning Hub; Neglect Subgroup; Complex and Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup.

### 3. Update on the previous year

### 3.1 Progress on priorities in the previous plan

Oldham YJS and partners have worked tirelessly over the past 12 months to progress with the actions agreed in the Oldham Youth Justice Plan 2025– 2026. A summary of this can be found within the table below.

| Priority Area                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Progress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Health:</b></p> <p>Children working with youth justice will have access to a fully comprehensive health offer as a foundation for achieving positive change</p> <p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>There will be a seconded school nurse in place to offer health assessments, inform assessments, planning and reports, and provide interventions for children</p> | <p>Oldham YJS now have a full health team made up of a Speech and Language Therapist, CAMHS Practitioner and School Nurse, who work alongside our Mind Emotional Wellbeing Coach and Substance Use Advocacy Worker.</p> <p>Each child referred into Oldham YJS is seen by the School Nurse within 10 days who completes an assessment. Following this and information sharing with the Case Manager, the child is then discussed at the bi- weekly Health Panel, to determine the plan of work that will be delivered to meet their needs in this area. This will include who is going to work with the child, what the work will entail and how long this piece of work is likely to take.</p> <p>The health needs of a child are re- assessed when there is a request for a Pre- Sentence Report or when there is a change in the child's circumstances.</p> |
| <p><b>Transitions:</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>In 2025, YJPMB agreed that in absence of a seconded Probation Officer, finance would be provided to YJS to recruit a Case Manager to</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Children will have a positive transition from youth to adult services that is aligned to Child First principles and effectively manages risk and safety and wellbeing</p> <p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>There will be arrangements in place with Probation to assess, plan and manage children transitioning to adult services</p> | <p>lead on transitions to Probation. This would be reviewed on an annual basis due to national capacity issues within NPS. This arrangement is going to continue into 2026- 2027.</p> <p>In light of this, the Oldham Transitions Policy was reviewed to ensure all children who will transfer to Probation are identified at the earliest opportunity, information is shared and warm handovers are provided to promote relationships and engagement.</p>                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>First Time Entrants:</b></p> <p>Children will be supported at the earliest opportunity to prevent entering, or further contact with the Youth Justice System</p> <p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>The number of first- time entrants into the criminal justice system will reduce</p>                                              | <p>Over the past 12 months, the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system has decreased each quarter.</p> <p>There is now consistent use of Outcome 22 and Deferred Caution across the service so that children receive early support outside of the formal criminal justice system.</p> <p>In 2025, Oldham YJS, alongside colleagues in Greater Manchester are working with the Youth Endowment Fund to further progress this area of work through the Whole Area Model- Diversion which will seek to improve practice and ensure consistency across the region. This will continue into 2026- 2027.</p> |
| <p><b>Victims:</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>Previous issues relating to consent to contact victims were resolved with a new process in place which involves the YJS Police Officer</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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| <p>Victims of crimes committed by children and communities will feel safe and protected</p> <p>Victims of crimes committed by children will be supported with any identified needs, aligned with their protected characteristics</p> <p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>The number of referrals into the service for Out of Court Disposals or Court Orders with consent to contact victims will increase</p> <p>There will be an increase in Restorative Justice interventions delivered within the service</p> | <p>following this up when not obtained. The number of victims working with the service has increased significantly over the past year.</p> <p>A communication document has been produced by YJS and shared with GMP regarding the “Oldham YJS Victim Offer) which has been shared with the force to increase the understanding of the service.</p> <p>The YJS Team received training via Remedi, specialists in Restorative Justice, as well as in house training from Operational Managers to improve the interventions being delivered to victims in terms of restorative justice, safety planning and support.</p> |
| <p><b>Serious Youth Violence:</b></p> <p>Children, victims and communities will feel safe and protected</p> <p>Children will receive the relevant support to prevent involvement, or further involvement, in serious youth violence</p> <p><b>Measure:</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Serious Youth Violence is now a priority of the Oldham Safeguarding Children’s Partnership as such there is a Serious Youth Violence Action Plan.</p> <p>However, the rates in Oldham continue to be statistically above average and there was an increase in Serious Incident Notifications from 2 in 2024 to 7 in 2025 and 2 to date in 2026.</p> <p>This work will continue into 2026- 2027.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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| <p>There will be a reduction in Serious Incident Incidents submitted to the Youth Justice Board</p> <p>There will be a reduction in the rates of Serious Youth Violence within the service</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>Data and Quality Assurance:</b></p> <p>Improvements to service delivery will be responsive and based on quantitative and qualitative data to ensure that the partnership offer is aligned to observations and trends in data</p> <p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>The Youth Justice Partnership Management Board, partner and staff will report a better understanding of the work of the youth justice service</p> <p>There will be a more comprehensive “Impact Report” in place each quarter for delivery to the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board</p> | <p>There has been a significant improvement to the data and quality assurance activity over the past year.</p> <p>The new “impact Report” was launched in September 2025 which improved the quantitative and qualitative data available to the YJPMB and partners. Board members are encouraged to share this within their own service areas.</p> <p>The YJS Quality Assurance Framework has been implemented consistently which sees 9 full Quality Assurance Audits completed each quarter, with findings being shared with the Case Manager and Manager and developments to be overseen through supervision. Each quarter, the YJPMB receives a Quality Assurance Report with a summary of findings and action plan as part of the Impact Report.</p> <p>In Autumn 2025, the service commissioned external quality assurance activity through Child First Consultancy. The outcome of this</p> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>was that YJS would be in a strong position to receive a “good” inspection outcome based on the cases observed. From this actions were progressed by the management team to strengthen practice in relation to safety planning and victims, with funding being sought to strengthen case formulation and risk assessment using the 5Ps Model.</p>                                                                                                                                       |
| <p><b>Child First:</b></p> <p>Children will receive a response from all services which is in line with the principles of child first to achieve positive change, manage risk and increase safety and wellbeing</p> <p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>Partners will report an improved understanding of Child First.</p> <p>Through partnership quality assurance work, evidence of Child First will be available throughout multi- agency working</p> <p>There will be no children remanded to custody due to placement sufficiency issues</p> | <p>There is a definite improvement in the understanding and implementation of Child First Principles across the partnership having delivered briefings to GMP and Children’s Social Care, with good examples of partnership working where children are appearing in court to ensure the correct outcome is reached.</p> <p>While the number of children remanded has risen, there have been no children remanded simply for the reason that there has not been a placement available.</p> |

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| <p><b>Policing:</b></p> <p>Children will receive a response from police in line with Child Centered Policing to achieve positive change, manage risk and increase safety and wellbeing</p> <p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>There will be a reduction in the number of children remanded to court and kept in the police station</p> <p>There will be improved reporting on children released under investigation, children on bail and children who are stopped and searched</p> | <p>A monthly meeting is scheduled between the Head of Service for YJS and MASH/ EDT to review children held in police custody overnight. There have been no instances whereby staff in Oldham EDT dealing with this have not followed the procedure for securing a PACE Bed but issues arise in terms of placement availability or time of charge. This will continue to be addressed into 2026 – 2027.</p> <p>A review of children released under investigation was presented to Senior Leaders in Police by a YJS Operational Manager which highlighted the impact of lengthy investigation times on children and the support they receive.</p> <p>In 2026- 2027, children who are stopped searched will be included in the Oldham Prevention Panel referrals to ensure these have oversight and offered to work with the relevant professionals at the earliest opportunity.</p> |
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### 3.2 Performance over the previous year

Oldham YJS, despite the challenging demographics highlighted earlier in this plan, continues to perform exceptionally well in all of the areas to be discussed in more detail below. This is in no small part due to the stable and dedicated workforce, who build positive relationships with children and families, using out Child First, trauma informed approach, which is supported by a strong multi-agency partnership.

Our performance data has progressed us into Quadrant 1 of the Youth Justice Oversight Framework since this was implemented.

### Reducing the number of First Time Entrants (FTE) into the criminal justice system

| FTE PNC rate per 100,000 of 10-17 population | Oldham | North West | Greater Manchester | YOT family group | England |
|----------------------------------------------|--------|------------|--------------------|------------------|---------|
| Jan 25 - Dec 25                              | 131    | 159        | 162                | 199              | 152     |
| Oct 24 - Sep 25                              | 162    | 161        | 175                | 199              | 154     |
| Jul 24 - Jun 25                              | 185    | 165        | 187                | 201              | 153     |
| Apr 24 - Mar 25                              | 202    | 165        | 192                | 187              | 157     |

Over the past year, the service saw a decrease in each quarter in the number of first- time entrants into the criminal justice system. In the final quarter, the figure sat well below that of all comparative groups.

There is a real focus on ensuring that, where appropriate, at the Joint Decision-Making Panel, children are afforded the opportunity to engage with an Outcome 22 or Deferred Caution to receive support without use of a formal disposal. This has been led strategically across Greater Manchester through the Police and Greater Manchester Youth Justice Senior Leadership Group, review of local policy and procedure and staff training.

Oldham has a robust prevention offer, using a combination of self and partnership referrals into the service, alongside the Greater Manchester Police (GMP), “PIED” (prevention, intervention, education and diversion) identification tool. In line with GDPR, details of all children linked to a crime in the borough are shared on a weekly basis. All children are then discussed at the bi- weekly Oldham Prevention Panel where agencies come together and agree who is best placed to support the child in the space of early intervention. Where it is agreed children will work with Oldham YJS, this is done via Turnaround or Prevention Intervention.

### Reducing re- offending by children subject to Court Orders or Out of Court Resolutions

| Reoffending - binary rate      | Oldham | North West | Greater Manchester | YJS family | England |
|--------------------------------|--------|------------|--------------------|------------|---------|
| Binary Rate - Jan 24 to Mar 24 | 26.70% | 29.80%     | 22.70%             | 25.30%     | 31.60%  |
| Binary Rate - Oct 23 to Dec 23 | 20.00% | 32.30%     | 25.70%             | 30.40%     | 32.00%  |
| Binary Rate - Jul 23 to Sep 23 | 7.70%  | 33.60%     | 25.60%             | 24.60%     | 31.40%  |
| Binary Rate - Apr 23 to Jun 23 | 12.5%  | 30.4%      | 25.8%              | 26.6%      | 31.7%   |

The number of children who have worked with Oldham YJS and gone onto commit further offences is consistently low. It is only in the final quarter that the figure was slightly higher than the Greater Manchester and YJS family average. However, it is worth noting that given the small number of children counted within this cohort, one child can increase the percentage point significantly. In 2025, the service introduced a “live re- offending tracker” to allow the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board more of an insight into this.

This low rate can be attributed to by the Child First approach taken to assessment, planning, delivery and managing risk, ensuring that the function of protecting the child, victims and public is not lost. Interventions are strengths based and build on the interests of the child, allowing for the development of a pro- social identity and raising their aspirations. Working holistically with parents and carers is crucial and we involve them at each stage, maintaining contact throughout and ensuring that their own support needs are considered. The professional team around the child is also key with attendance and engagement at multi- agency meetings being evident and the work of others is clear within plans.

### Reducing the use of custody for children

| Custody Rate per 1,000 of 10-17 population | Oldham | North West | YJS family | England |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|------------|------------|---------|
| Jan 25 - Dec 25                            | 0.10   | 0.09       | 0.14       | 0.09    |
| Oct 24 - Sep 25                            | 0.13   | 0.11       | 0.14       | 0.10    |
| Jul 24 - Jun 25                            | 0.14   | 0.14       | 0.14       | 0.10    |
| Apr 24 - Mar 25                            | 0.07   | 0.13       | 0.14       | 0.10    |

The use of custody in Oldham remains low with staff and partners ensuring that stringent community options are presented to the court on all occasions and that custodial sentences of this nature are only used where there are serious and imminent public protection concerns.

All Pre Sentence Reports go through a robust management oversight process to maintain high standards of work, to provide challenge and allow for professional development, and to make sure that reports are balanced, unbiased and appropriate language has been used.

All reports also now highlight the overrepresentation of specific groups, including children looked after and children from black and minority ethnic backgrounds so that the courts are aware of these statistics when coming to any decision that they make.

### **3.3 Risks and issues**

While Oldham Youth Justice Service is highly regarded across the Oldham partnership, within Greater Manchester and by the Youth Justice Board, in terms of performance and innovative working, we must still acknowledge any potential challenges we face.

#### **Serious Youth Violence**

Data tells us that Oldham observes higher than average levels of serious youth violence and this has been raised to the partnership at the relevant boards to ensure transparency. This has been a priority area for Oldham Safeguarding Children's Partnership since 2025 following a thematic review in which three local children were victims of such. There is a partnership action plan which sits within the Complex and Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup which has just been reviewed by the Head of Service for Youth Justice and Assistant Director for Children's Social Care. The Serious Violence Action Plan includes, but is not limited to; the development and implementation of a "risk outside the home pathway"; strengthening the awareness of early indicators of violence across all professionals; strengthening the identification of children involved in youth violence; and strengthening the response to early indicators of violence within education settings.

#### **Children Remanded in Custody**

In 2025 – 2026, Greater Manchester were approaching the end of the Remand Pilot, funded by the Ministry of Justice, which sought to reduce the number of children subject to custodial remand. Across the region, most local authorities saw a decrease in the number of children remanded in custody. However, Oldham observed an increase. In 2025, the Oldham Bail and Remand Strategy was reviewed and this is now a partnership document with a shared understanding and approach to this area of work, and we are also confident that Bail Packages before the Court are of high quality. While it is possible that the number of children remanded in

custody can be attributed to by the number of violent offences, as a partnership we need to ensure that multi- agency plans for children within the community are robust and effective to prevent further escalation into the criminal justice system.

### **Children Looked After**

Approximately 10% of the overall youth justice cohort are children looked after. However, this increases to 40% in the cohort of “re-offenders”, with two of these children having been in custody on more than once occasion (3 and 8). This year, through the YJS and Corporate Paenting Plan, overseen by the relevant boards, there will need to be a focus on how we can reduce this cycle for children in our care to improve the life chances away from the criminal justice system.

## **4. Plan for the forthcoming year**

### **4.1 Child First**

Child First principles permeate all aspects of service delivery in youth justice in Oldham and are becoming increasingly recognized across the partnership.

We prioritise the best interests of children through acknowledging their developmental needs, maturity and experiences in all aspects of our work, and seek to break down any structural barriers that may be in place such as access to services, education training and employment or housing. All staff have positive relationships with partners to be able to work together to do this and challenge where required. Staff have received training on Child First Assessment, Planning and Interventions to ensure that while working with the child in mind, risk is still accurately assessed and managed and the balance between these two often contradictory ways of working is sought.

We promote the child’s individual strengths and capacities to develop their prosocial identity. All staff use the acronym- AIR, activities, interactions and roles, when planning and delivering interventions. Over a number of years, the service has moved away from consequential interventions to ensure that a deficit model of work is not in place. We are immensely proud of the new opportunities and experiences we have been able to provide children to raise their aspirations through seeking additional funding to provide positive activities which includes children visiting places they previously not had the opportunity to see such as National

Trust and English Heritage sites. Within quality assurance work, the relationships that staff have with children and families is a key strength.

Children's active participation is encouraged and there is meaningful collaboration with children and their families. All children and their parents/ carers create their intervention plan alongside their Case Manager and contribute to the activities they carry out. They can also shape service delivery through "Your Opinions Matter". Children also take part in recruitment processes in which they devise their own questions for potential candidates are engaged in the decision making around who will be offered the role.

We promote a childhood removed from the justice system. In 2025, Oldham introduced PIED- Prevention, Intervention, Education and Diversion to identify children coming into contact with the Police on a weekly basis. These children are screened by partners and discussed at the well- established multi- agency Prevention Panel, alongside referrals from schools and other organizations, to agree who is best placed to offer early intervention. We are increasing the use of Outcome 22 and Deferred Caution/ Prosecution and have trained all staff in this, updating the Prevention and Diversion Policy in addition.

Children and families working with Oldham Youth Justice Service say:

*"Workers make it easy as they can to just get me through the order without making my life even more difficult. It's much better than what I thought. I'm glad I stuck with it"*

*"Everything runs smooth and they help me when I need it and make my life easier"*

*"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for being such a refreshing supportive change to many of the professionals I've had trying to make me believe all of X's' problems are my doing. I'm so grateful for the pro action you have taken on this. Thank you so much"*

*"I really enjoyed our waffles (chats). You have been reliable so I have been able to open up and talk about things. Thank you for helping me to not get a court order"*

*"I have felt heard and supported. Thank you for all you have done for him and us".*

*“Just wanted to say thank you so much for your help in getting C referred for possible ADHD. A little over a year ago, you lead on referring him. Anyway, a year later we have a diagnosis of ADHD and the children’s team at CAAMHS are treating him and keeping him until he’s stabilised before he transfers to the adult team”*

*“Overall the support that has given to A has been brilliant. He has been shown compassion and empathy throughout. You have been patient and kind. A really took to his worker and he has worked very well him. I am very happy and would like to say thank you”*

*“Thank you to YJS for supporting K to obtain his CSC Card, gain employment and helping him with speech and language”.*

#### **4.2 Resources and services**

This plan provides assurance throughout that the youth justice core grant will be used appropriately, as described in the Terms and Conditions of Grant.

Oldham Youth Justice Service is committed to ensuring value for money. The youth justice budget comprises of local authority funding and the Youth Justice Board grant which, in the main, supports the core staffing of the service. Staffing is further supplemented through the Ministry of Justice Turnaround Grant, the Greater Manchester Early Intervention and Prevention Grant and partnership secondments. The staffing structure has previously been highlighted and is contained within Appendix 1.

The commissioning arrangement between the local authority and Positive Steps is advantageous as it allows the Youth Justice Service to express an interest in and apply for funding streams that other services would not be able to. We will continue to explore opportunities for additional funding to enhance the offer for children and families. At the point of writing this plan the following have been confirmed or are in progress for 2026 – 2027 (all have been described in detail in other sections of this plan).

- Tameside, Oldham and Glossop Mind and Oldham Youth Justice Service- Emotional Wellbeing Coach, funded by Oldham Community Safety Partnership
- Family First Partnership Youth Violence Pilot, funded by the local authority
- 5 Ps Case Formulation- training and implementation support, funded by Oldham Community Safety Partnership

We use our grant, partner contributions and additional funding streams to achieve our vision and primary functions, while driving best practice and demonstrating excellent performance. Our performance will be improved in 2027 – 2027 by:

- Ensuring all children working with the service have a full and comprehensive health offer, including physical, mental and sexual health, through further development of the Oldham Health Panel, so that these needs are addressed to promote desistence.
- Continuing to reduce the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system through partnership training, continuation of the well- established Prevention Panel and promotion of the use of Outcome 22 and Deferred Caution/ Prosecution.
- Working with the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board to understand the increase in the number of children remanded in custody and implement an associated action plan across the partnership.
- Reducing instances of Serious Youth Violence through taking an active role within the Safeguarding Partnership and Community Safety Partnership, sharing expertise and completing the associated action plans which sit within these groups.
- Increasing the voice of the victim and improving their experience of working with youth justice, through ensuring processes are in place to gain consent to contact victims whereby crimes are committed by children, and that there is an escalation process in place when this does not occur. Quality Assurance work relating to this area will be included in the annual Quality Assurance Framework.

#### **4.3 Board development**

The Oldham Youth Justice Partnership Management Board has an established and experienced Chair with active members who promote the work of youth justice in their own service areas and provide challenge and scrutiny where required.

In 2025, a new quarterly Impact Report was implemented which not only demonstrates the required performance measures, but also provides a Quality Assurance report, a narrative story on “added value” for that period, feedback received on the staff and service from children, parents and carers and professionals, and case studies, to provide the board with a far more in depth understanding of the work that we do to achieve such positive performance figures.

Work has taken place to improve the board over the last few years and the board is now stable, with both new and long-standing members who are committed to their role. They actively take responsibility for all aspects of youth justice; lead strategically across relevant partners and ensure a high- quality service is provided to all children. In 2025, a new Youth Justice Board Induction Pack

was developed to improve this process and ensure that all involved have access to the relevant information they need to contribute to the successful oversight of youth justice.

In 2025, the Oldham Youth Justice Partnership Management Board introduced Multi- Agency Case Discussions, using the HMIP template, into the Oldham Youth Justice Quality Assurance Framework. Completed each quarter, a board member takes the lead for chairing a partnership case discussion and provides feedback on areas of strength regarding how professionals have worked together to achieve positive change.

Annually, Oldham Youth Justice Partnership Management Board holds a development day. In 2026, this will cover YJB Reforms, Inspection Readiness, Participation, Analysis of Children who Re- offend and a showcase of YJS work.

#### **4.4 Workforce development**

There is recognition that the most important asset to the service is the staff team and so a real focus is placed on professional development from the outset and internal promotion. This is evidenced through a number of staff having started their journey as volunteers or apprentices, as well as others who have held numerous roles making their way up to leadership and management positions. All staff receive an in- depth induction, not only to youth justice, but to Positive Steps and the partnership.

Each member of staff has an annual appraisal where targets are set for the year to promote their development and are in line with their lead areas of practice, some of which include; work in court; serious youth violence; complex safeguarding; harmful sexual behaviour; and disproportionality. This process is then supported by regular supervision both by their Operational Manager and peers, direct observations and informal discussions.

Training for the year is set based on a review by the management team of each appraisal. All permanent staff have completed the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate and all Case Managers are trained in AIM3. All staff have ongoing access to varied training from the Oldham Safeguarding Partnership and Youth Justice Legal Centre. In 2026, the service will be implementing the 5Ps Model of Case Formulation which is funded through the Community Safety Partnership and delivered by Tameside, Oldham and Glossop Mind who we have a long-standing working relationship with.

As part of the wider workforce development across the partnership, there is a comprehensive offer from youth justice which sees training being delivered to other services on; Youth Justice and Child First, Missing from Home and Contextual Safeguarding. This promotes the understanding of the role and of our service, our offer and ways of working. We have also worked collaboratively with other services in Greater Manchester to provide training to the judiciary around Child First and Speech and Language, with a full Magistrates Engagement Afternoon in June 2026.

Staff in youth justice are also provided with the opportunity to develop through secondments to other teams or services. We continue to have one Engagement Worker seconded to the Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce at the Pupil Referral Unit where they are part of a multi-disciplinary team, working to reduce and prevent exclusions, increase integration back into mainstream, reduce offending and violence and increase emotional wellbeing. We have also seconded another Engagement Worker into a Senior Engagement Worker role in the Family First Partnership pilot to support early intervention in relation to serious youth violence in the south district of the borough.

Positive Steps understands the importance of a healthy workforce and as such, all employees and their families have access to the TELUS Health and Wellbeing Platform. TELUS has a wide range of online wellbeing resources, as well as telephone and online support available 24/7 with professional advisors who are able to provide advice, work- life support and onward referrals. Immediate and short-term counselling is also available as well as in person counselling.

All staff have access to Reflective Supervision provided by our seconded CAMHS Practitioner and Speech and Language with the primary purpose of enhancing both the wellbeing and professional development of the team, ultimately leading to better outcomes for the children and families we work with.

#### **4.5 Knife possession guidance**

In February 2026, the Ministry of Justice published, “A Modern Youth Justice System”, which included new knife crime possession offences guidance which requires all police forces and youth justice services to adhere to. The change supports the government’s target to half knife crime over this decade and places a greater focus on prevention, early intervention and diversion, stipulating that all children caught in possession of a weapon will be referred into the youth justice service and receive mandatory intervention.

This new approach came into effect on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2026, and as such, Oldham YJS and GMP have implemented the following:

- GMP notify Oldham YJS of every child found to be in possession of a knife as a standalone offence within 24 hours.
- GMP complete a Child Action Plan which is shared with Police based in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.
- Notifications are tracked by YJS Service Support to ensure that a full referral for an Out of Court Resolution is received at the point of the investigation completed or that children are referred into the Oldham Prevention Panel via the weekly PIED data.
- All children charged with simple knife offences have the relevant YJS assessment completed and the appropriate outcome is agreed within a Joint Decision-Making Panel.
- In Oldham, all children have access to the same resource within the service, regardless of the outcome they receive to ensure this is robust, led by the needs of the child and built on the foundations of being Child First, trauma informed and strengths based.

#### **4.6 Evidence- based practice and innovation**

##### **TOG Mind Emotional Wellbeing Coach Partnership**

Oldham Youth Justice Service will enter its fourth year of partnering with Tameside, Oldham and Glossop (TOG) Mind to support children with their emotional wellbeing. We know that many children present with concerns at varying levels in this area but there are often structural barriers in place or stigma which prevent engagement with services. As such, the service benefits from the secondment of an Emotional Wellbeing Coach who has provided support in areas such as anxiety, stress, mindfulness, grief and bereavement, grounding techniques, sleep and adverse childhood experiences to name a few. The outcomes of this partnership have been extraordinary with only two children out of 51 having been convicted with further offences in 2025 – 2026. In recognition of the positive outcomes we have achieved, this project is now included on the Youth Justice Resource Hub for other services to replicate and Community Safety Partnership have agreed to the funding for this for another year.

##### **Family First Partnership**

The Families First Partnership (FFP) is a UK government-backed initiative designed to transform children's social care by creating an integrated, "whole-system" approach. It shifts focus towards early intervention, providing tailored support to keep families together, reduce crisis, and improve outcomes through multi-agency collaboration.

In April 2026, a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) at Positive Steps was set up with a focus on delivery within the South District of Oldham, changing the way we work with families through a 12-month period of test and learn. The team consists of a range of professionals who will work together to provide holistic support to children, young people and families and includes, a Family Voice Co- Ordinator, a Family Voice Engagement Worker, two Engagement Workers, a Careers Advisor, a Career Coach and a Senior Engagement Worker, seconded from Oldham Youth Justice Service to focus on serious youth violence. While still in the early stages, the team will share information as appropriate, maximise impact and effectiveness for those they engage with, by joining up support, sequencing, and agreeing priorities with families. We will utilise existing commissioned partners and pathways to ensure we are dovetailing rather than duplicating.

### **Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium**

In 2025- 2026, alongside local and national colleagues, Oldham YJS continued to lead the Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium at both strategic and operational levels to improve outcomes for children entering and leaving custody. The work of the consortium this year has included quarterly data sharing which helps to understand areas of strength and development across the region, quality assurance through Multi- Agency Case Discussions chaired by the Head of Service for Oldham Youth Justice Service, raising the profile of ROTL to increase usage in support of resettlement and considering the education, training and employment for children leaving custody.

As part of this, there has been a dedicated Social Worker for Greater Manchester Children in HMPYOI Wetherby who has strengthened the safeguarding responses for our children and provides a quarterly report to services which demonstrates not only data but good practice in this area of work.

Going into 2026- 2027, this work will continue through the Greater Manchester Youth Justice Hub, within the workstream of, “Preventing Custody, Remand and Resettlement” with a plan already in development to ensure the longevity of positive progress already made.

### **Greater Manchester Remand Pilot**

Oldham have been part of the Greater Manchester Remand Pilot which was funded by the Ministry of Justice in 2024 to explore whether a regional, pooled funding model could reduce the number of secure remands and provide better outcomes for children.

The pilot has delivered strong outcomes on the whole, demonstrating clear financial and operational benefits alongside system change. The pilot's use of Remands into Local Authority Accommodation generated estimated savings of £3.4m, driven by learning, more timely and informed decision making and instilling best practice. It also strengthened partnership working across agencies, improved use of data and insights, and increased confidence in using alternatives to remand where appropriate.

Regional pooled funding allowed the commissioning of Greater Manchester's first dedicated remand accommodation provision, The Branch, and plans are underway to secure remand fostering. Building on these outcomes, the next steps will focus on embedding the learning from the pilot and sustaining the benefits achieved within Oldham to reduce the number of our children placed in custody.

### **Youth Endowment Fund Whole Area Model Diversion**

In 2025, Youth Justice Services in Greater Manchester began to work with the Youth Endowment Fund and Centre for Justice and Innovation to strengthen police and youth justice processes in the area of diversion. The pilot is overseen by a Project Manager from Remedi, with the aim of ensuring that children who commit minor offences receive evidence based, equitable support to avoid formal criminal justice processing and lower re-offending rates where appropriate. Six core principles were developed on which work will be focussed: culture; contact and criteria; custody; collaboration; care; and checks.

To date, "wins" of the pilot have been, agreeing a joint out of court policy and protocol between GMP and the 9 youth justice services, a workshop on sector based communication has been completed, a communication specialist has supported the production of a child friendly victim information sheet regarding consent for child victims and Rocket Science (data specialists) have completed their scoping work around what data sets and agreements are currently being used across Greater Manchester.

Next steps will include, onboarding a police consultant and race equity associate, supporting wider victim work, observing Joint Decision-Making Panels, reviewing Out of Court Resolution Scrutiny Panels and holding a joint learning event in July.

### **Greater Manchester Youth Justice Hub**

Over the next three years the ambition for Greater Manchester is that we develop a Youth Justice (YJ) Hub which will provide a coordinating function and serve “engine room” for youth justice transformation and system improvement across Greater Manchester.

The hub will aim to reduce cross-borough variation by standardising expectations, pathways, tools and training where appropriate and improve children’s experiences and outcomes through child-centred, trauma-informed practice and meaningful participation. It will support the use of pooled resources across the ten authorities with the aim of commissioning projects on a larger scale and piloting innovative ways to practice.

Strategic oversight sits with GMCA and the ten Directors of Children’s Services (within the wider transformation MoU), with multi-agency governance through the GM Youth Justice Transformation Board.

The Hub aims to support partners and practitioner networks across prevention, diversion, courts, community, custody and resettlement. It will aim to capture, evaluate and scale learning from pilots and innovation into consistent GM-wide practice and provide practical support.

#### **4.7 Evaluation and standards for children**

##### **TOG Mind Partnership**

An annual evaluation of the TOG Mind Partnership was completed in April 2026 . In 2025- 2026, the Emotional Wellbeing Coach worked with 51 children across Prevention, Out of Court, Court and Bail. This year we saw an increase in children being supported who were working on the Turnaround Programme. Interventions that have been covered have been wide reaching and are always based on the needs of the child. These have included; anxiety and stress; motivation; grounding techniques; mindfulness; resilience; self- awareness and adverse childhood experiences. Only two children who the coach has worked with have gone on to be commit further offences (one further offence each). Thie children have said that the support from the coach is, “brilliant” and another said, “I felt listened to and not judged”. Children have observed improvements in education, in relation to their self- esteem and within family relationships.

##### **Child First Consultancy Quality Assurance**

In autumn 2025, Oldham YJS commissioned Child First Consultancy to carry out a piece of external quality assurance work to provide assurance regarding practice and inspection readiness and to inform continuous improvement and wider workforce development. This focused on 8 children across Domaine 2 within the HMIP criteria for case selection and sought to identify themes of strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations for practice.

A summary of the key findings in the three areas audited are detailed below:

| <b>Assessing</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Strengths</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Areas for Improvement</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessments were consistently high quality, holistic, and trauma-informed.</li> <li>• The Good Lives Model was used effectively, balancing child needs and public safety.</li> <li>• Strong multi-agency involvement (e.g., education, health, social care) enhanced understanding of children's needs.</li> <li>• Assessments were child-centred and relational, with good engagement and inclusion of the child's voice.</li> <li>• Good evidence of equality, diversity and inclusion considerations.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the analytical framework for complex cases by implementing The 5Ps Model</li> <li>• Potential victims were not consistently identified or addressed in assessments.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Planning</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

| Strengths                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Areas for Improvement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans were future-focused, strengths-based, and adapted to changing circumstances.</li> <li>Safety planning for children and others was generally robust, with good use of external controls.</li> </ul>                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safety planning for potential victims was inconsistent in some cases.</li> <li>Lower-risk cases lacked sufficient or creative safety planning to sustain low risk and enhance safety.</li> <li>Contingency planning was sometimes generic and lacked co-production with children, families, and networks.</li> </ul> |
| Delivery                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Strengths                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Areas for Improvement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of excellent practice (e.g., accredited qualifications, education interventions, reparation activities).</li> <li>Strong multi-agency safety planning through daily meetings and strategy discussions.</li> <li>RMM meetings provided robust safety planning</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were delays in police investigations and criminal justice processes in multiple cases</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

All of the above has been addressed through internal training provided by the YJS Operational Managers to the team. In 2026- 2027, Oldham Community Safety Partnership have agreed to fund training to implement The 5Ps Model to strengthen the analytical framework used in assessments.

## Internal Quality Assurance

In 2025 – 2026, Oldham YJS have continued to implement an annual Quality Assurance Framework to evaluate practice which includes 9 cases being selected at random each quarter to be fully quality assured by the Operational Managers. Each Quality Assurance Audit is rated across; Local Practice Standards; assessment; planning implementation; resettlement (where applicable); reviewing; the child’s experience; management oversight; and victim work.

cases have been quality assured this year.

| Rating               | Total |
|----------------------|-------|
| Outstanding          | 12    |
| Good                 | 21    |
| Requires Improvement | 3     |
| Inadequate           |       |

Each quarter, the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board are provide with a Quality Assurance Report within the Impact Report to summarize key findings and actions required to drive development.

## Multi- Agency Case Discussions

Multi- Agency Case Discussions forms part of the Oldham YJS Quality Assurance Framework, with one discussion held per quarter, led by a board member and attended by partners. 4 children were discussed in 2025 – 2026 and actions progressed for service and partnership development. Professionals have feedback that they have found this process beneficial, giving them time to reflect on their practice. A summary of findings from discussions is detailed below.

- There is a good understanding of “why” the child has come into contact with YJS.
- The child’s voice is clear, assessments draw on strengths and interests, and are multi- agency in approach.
- Risk of harm and safety and wellbeing are understood by partners.
- Plans are comprehensive and involve a range of partners

- Risk Management plans are clear and Risk Management Meetings are well used
- Agencies attempt to break down barriers
- Relationships are positive
- Advocacy is strong
- There is a real focus on education

## **5. National priority areas**

### **5.1 Children from groups which are over- represented**

At times, we see children from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and children looked after over- represented within the criminal justice system. In an analysis of children who re- offend completed in April 2026 covering the previous 12 months, 40% of children who had more than one contact with Oldham YJS were children looked after. In 2026- 2027, we will relaunch the Oldham Disproportionality Strategy and The Oldham Protocol on Reducing the Unnecessary Criminalisation of Children Looked After and Care Leavers which demonstrates a partnership commitment to addressing this issue. Reducing the number of children looked after who have contact with the criminal justice system is a strategic priority within the Oldham Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026 – 2029 evidencing shared priorities for this group of children.

### **5.2 Policing**

In Oldham, there has been a longstanding commitment to having a seconded Police Officer within the Youth Justice Service with the seconded Police Officer has been in role for six years. They are part of the Oldham Prevention Hub portfolio which highlights the priority for early intervention, prevention and diversion, and they play a key role in identifying children at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system, and decision making in the Prevention Panel and in Out of Court Joint Decision- Making Panel, as well as being involved in developing risk management and safety plans. They have led on the implementation of Outcome 22 and Deferred Caution/ Prosecution in Oldham.

Greater Manchester Police introduced the Child Centered Policing Strategy in 2023 and while there is direction from strategic leaders in relation to this, research conducted by Manchester Metropolitan University found that operationally they are at an earlier

stage of embedding consistent practice in this area. Therefore, a focus on supporting advancements in confidence and intent will be a priority for this year.

### **5.3 Prevention**

Oldham YJS are proud that the holistic offer available for children and families working with the service remains the same regardless of the intervention the child is working under. This means that all children are overseen by a Case Manager, can access the health offer in its entirety and can gain support from the same funding pots to promote desistance.

Oldham is committed to preventing children from entering the criminal justice system and this can be observed through the multi-agency commitment to the well- established Prevention Panel. Partnership decision making here ensures that information is shared in a timely manner and the child receives support from those with expertise in their area of need or those who already have positive relationships. In 2026- 2027, we will expand the referrals into this panel to include children who have been stopped and searched.

Turnaround has been established in Oldham since 2023 and in 2025 – 2026, 48 children and families were referred into this programme. The service is also fortunate to receive a small grant from Greater Manchester Combined Authority to offer early intervention work to those children who do not meet the criteria for Turnaround which has been agreed for a further 6 months into 2026 – 2027.

As has been noted earlier within this plan, Oldham YJS are part of a multi- disciplinary team working as part of a Family First Partnership pilot with a focus on serious youth violence at the stage of early intervention. Referrals to this come via the Oldham Prevention Panel.

### **5.4 Diversion**

Diversion remains a priority and we have been working closely with the Youth Endowment Fund as detailed in the earlier sections of this plan. We have observed a decrease in each quarter in the number of first time entrants into the criminal justice system which demonstrates positive progress in this area, with only one child not successfully completing their Out of Court Resolution.

All children who receive an Out of Court Disposal have this agreed at a Joint Decision- Making Panel which is attended by youth justice, police, social care. Where other professionals are involved, they may also attend to contribute. Where there is disagreement on an outcome, there is an agreed escalation route in place.

Oldham YJS are also part of the Mentally Vulnerable Offender Panel which sees children who have become involved in an offence and charged be diverted to other agencies specializing in mental health. This ensures that children are not unnecessarily involved with justice-related service because of an unmet need where appropriate. This is being further promoted now that we have a CAMHS Practitioner seconded to youth justice and her expertise is essential to this assessment and decision making.

## **5.5 Education**

Oldham YJS demonstrate excellent performance in relation to education, training and employment. We have an experienced YJS Co- Ordinator with a background in education who focusses on this as part of her role and uses her expertise and relationships to ensure that children have access to provision that is suited to their needs. We recognize that attendance and school exclusions are a risk factor for children becoming involved in the criminal justice system and in response to this, the Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce has been set up at Kingsland Pupil Referral Unit with staff from YJS being seconded into the team for the third year.

Being based within Positive Steps is of great benefit as the service sits alongside the Careers Information Advice and Guidance Service, Positive Futures Alternative Provision and Empower Oldham (UKSPF). This means there are established relationships with staff from these areas, information sharing is efficient and more importantly, children know the building and professionals when referring into Positive Futures or Empower Oldham. Empower Oldham is becoming a popular option for children working with YJS who are not in education, training or employment for those who are post 16.

Where a child is released from custody and does not have education, training or employment in place, the Director of Education and member of the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board, has requested that he is made aware of these instances.

Oldham have had in place for a number of years an Education Risk Assessment so that children can remain in their current school, college or training provider, and this does not break down simply because of the offence that has been committed. This has been

adopted the Greater Manchester Remand Pilot and further developed with the main colleges in the area to be used across all services in the region.

### **5.6 Restorative approaches and victims**

The service has a YJS Co- Ordinator who focuses on restorative justice and victims as part of her role. They work in line with the Oldham Restorative Justice Policy and Victim Code of Practice.

In Oldham there are various indirect options available for children to complete their Giving Back including work with Oldham Foodbank, My Community Wardrobe and through local councilors who identify areas of the borough which may need support with gardening. Children are also supported to engage with activities of their own choosing and have enjoyed wrapping Christmas gifts for children and families in need.

Over the past year, issues around gaining consent to contact victims from the police have been resolved. The number of victims actively working with the service has increased and support is being provided around re- integration to schools, positive activities and referrals to mental health services. Training has also been delivered to YJS staff on victim safety planning. The increase in work means that in 2026- 2027, we will seek funding opportunities to increase staffing capacity through implementing a victim mentoring role to work alongside the YJS Co- Ordinator.

### **5.7 Serious violence, exploitation and contextual safeguarding**

Oldham Youth Justice Service, through the Head of Service, are part of the Community Safety Partnership and through the CEO of Positive Steps, the Oldham Safeguarding Children's Partnership, with the YJS Management Team being involved in related subgroups.

Serious Youth Violence is now a partnership priority following a number of serious incidents referred to the Child Safeguarding National Panel. There is an action plan which sits within the Complex and Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup to address this. Following any serious incident, the process for referral to national panel is followed or the Oldham Safeguarding Children's Partnership conduct a Brief Learning Review to ensure any learning is taken forward. At Oldham YJS, these actions sit within the Safeguarding Assurance Group to provide oversight and scrutiny on completion or any barriers that may be in place.

It has been noted that rates of serious youth violence in Oldham are above average and we have an increasing rate of Serious Incident Notifications submitted year on year. As such, this has been raised at the relevant partnership boards and a review of the action plan has been completed to ensure that this is making positive progress within this area.

Oldham YJS has a Case Manager who leads on Complex and Contextual Safeguarding and attends Daily Governance Meetings with the Complex Safeguarding Hub to ensure information is shared and actions to safeguard children are complete. The service also plays a role in decision making on referrals through attendance at the Missing and Child Exploitation Panel. We are aware that children often find themselves working with both YJS and Complex Safeguarding and as such, a Joint Working Protocol has been developed to ensure responsibilities are clear and there is no duplication of work. We also collaborate to ensure children are referred into the National Referral Mechanism when needed.

### **5.8 Detention in police custody**

In Oldham, we recognise the impact that being held in police custody has on a child both mentally but also with regards to the likelihood of an onward remand to custody should they appear in the dock upon presentation at Court.

Each month, the YJS Head of Service and Head of Service for MASH and EDT review all children held overnight to ensure that a transfer out to a PACE Bed has been considered. This process is often difficult due to the times children are charged with offences and cut off times for PACE Bed providers. This is something that will be explored at a Greater Manchester level in 2026- 2027 to ensure there are improved options available for our children.

Should there be any concerns relating to the treatment of a child in police custody, we ensure children and families are aware of complaints processes and can advocate on their behalf or raise any issues professionally.

### **5.9 Remands**

Oldham YJS work tirelessly to prevent children from being unnecessarily remanded to custody. This year we have reviewed the Bail and Remand Strategy, and this is now a partnership document which promotes children remaining at home on bail where appropriate and concludes a shared understanding of preventing children from being unnecessarily remanded. This year there has

been some great examples of partnership working in support of bail across multiple agencies to ensure children do not need to be remanded in custody but that communities and victims can be kept safe.

That said, we have observed an increase in the number of children remanded in custody which could be attributed to by the levels of violent offending but will need to be further explored to fully understand the depth of this issues.

We have been an active part of the Greater Manchester Remand Pilot which has been discussed in detail previously in this plan.

#### **5.10 Use of custody and constructive resettlement**

When children go into custody, we are mindful of the trauma this will cause themselves and their family. We have a YJS Co-Ordinator who focuses on this area of work to support both parties alongside their Case Manager. In recognition that custody numbers in Oldham are low and this effects the experience some staff have in relation to this, we have introduced Custody Planning Panels to ensure all staff are working in line with Local Practice Standards and timeframes are met.

We know that accommodation for children leaving custody can be an issue and so Case Managers know that planning for release begins at the point of sentence and will escalate any concerns with accommodation or ETE via the correct routes. There has been an increase in the use if ROTL this year to support children upon release back into the community, particularly around maintaining family relationships.

Oldham have also responsible for leading the Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium which has also been discussed in detail in this report and will continue to lead on this work alongside the Greater Manchester Youth Justice Hub in the coming year.

#### **5.11 Working with families**

Working with families is fundamental to achieving positive change and is identified in the assessment and plan for the child. Practitioners build trusted relationships with the family and often work with different family members individually, as well as together. This can include re- building relationships or this year, we have focused on joint safety and contingency planning with family members.

Oldham YJS benefit from being co- located with the Early Intervention and Prevention Service (Early Help) and as such information sharing can be quick as well as discussions being able to take place informally regarding potential referrals. Families also do not experience the stigma of coming to a YJS office to access this given the holistic offer from Positive Steps.

**6. Priorities for the year and service development**

The Service Development Plan for the coming year has been developed in line with the content of this document and is aligned to the national priority areas discussed above. This details the activity of the Oldham Youth Justice Partnership for the next 12 months and who is responsible for this. Each quarter, the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board will receive an update on the progress of the plan, as well as any risks, challenges or issues that arise in relation to this.

The Service Development Plan 2026 – 2027 can be found in Appendix 4.

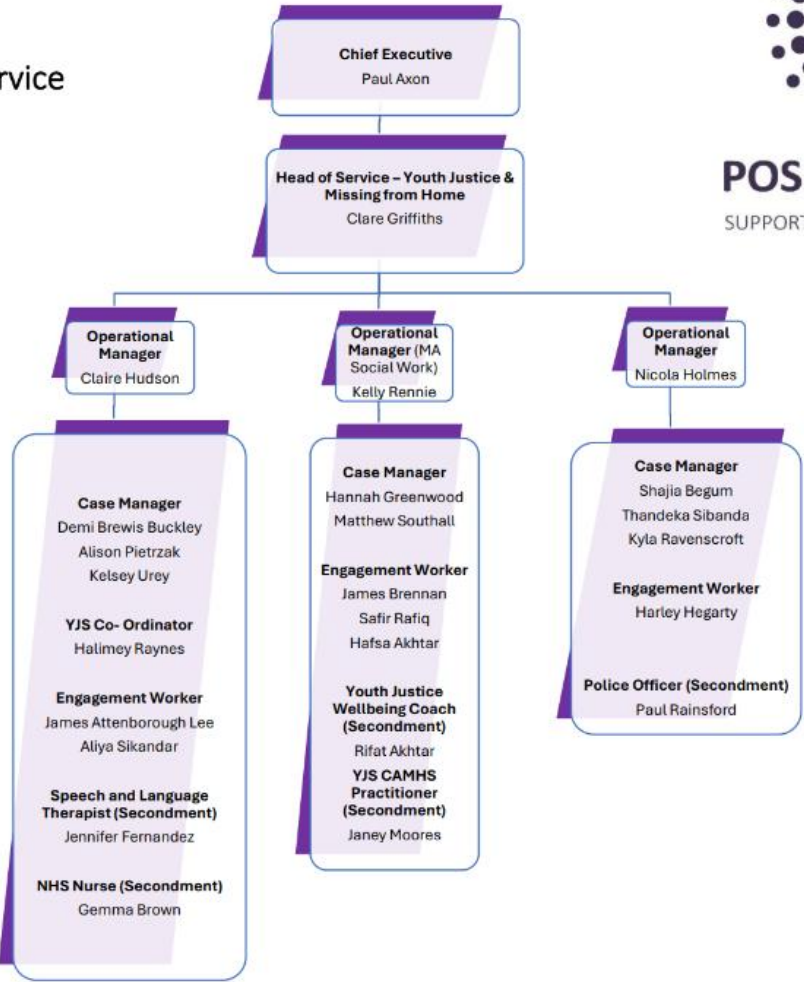
**7. Sign off**

|                                                                   |                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Chair of Oldham Youth Justice Partnership Management Board</b> | Julie Daniels, Executive Director, Children and Young People, Oldham Council |
| <b>Signature</b>                                                  |                                                                              |
| <b>Date</b>                                                       |                                                                              |
| <b>Council Representative</b>                                     |                                                                              |
| <b>Signed</b>                                                     |                                                                              |
| <b>Date</b>                                                       |                                                                              |

Appendix 1: Staffing Structure

POSITIVE STEPS – ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE – June 2026

Youth Justice  
Missing from Home Service



Appendix 2: Characteristics of the Workforce

| Ethnicity       |    | Gender |        | Known Disability |
|-----------------|----|--------|--------|------------------|
|                 |    | Male   | Female |                  |
| White British   | 17 | 3      | 14     | 1                |
| Pakistani       | 4  | 2      | 2      |                  |
| Bangladeshi     | 1  | 0      | 1      |                  |
| White Caribbean | 1  | 1      | 0      |                  |
| Black African   | 1  | 0      | 1      |                  |
| White Irish     | 1  | 1      | 0      |                  |

### Appendix 3: Youth Justice Partnership Management Board Membership

| <b>Name</b>                 | <b>Role</b>                                                         | <b>Organisation</b>                       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>CHAIR- Julie Daniels</b> | <b>Executive Director Children and Young People (DCS)</b>           | <b>Oldham Council</b>                     |
| <b>Clare Griffiths</b>      | <b>Head of Service</b>                                              | <b>Oldham YJS</b>                         |
| <b>Tony Decrop</b>          | <b>Director Children's Social Care and Early Help</b>               | <b>Oldham Council</b>                     |
| <b>Sheila Garara</b>        | <b>Assistant Director Children's Services Integration</b>           | <b>Oldham Council</b>                     |
| <b>Paul Axon</b>            | <b>Chief Executive Officer</b>                                      | <b>Positive Steps</b>                     |
| <b>Claire Hudson</b>        | <b>Operational Manager</b>                                          | <b>Oldham YJS</b>                         |
| <b>Nicola Holmes</b>        | <b>Operational Manager</b>                                          | <b>Oldham YJS</b>                         |
| <b>Kelly Rennie</b>         | <b>Operational Manager</b>                                          | <b>Oldham YJS</b>                         |
| <b>Cara Charlesworth</b>    | <b>District Superintendent</b>                                      | <b>GMP</b>                                |
| <b>Amy Poulson</b>          | <b>Head of Oldham Delivery Unit</b>                                 | <b>National Probation Service</b>         |
| <b>Lorraine Kenny</b>       | <b>Head of Violence Reduction and Community Safety Services</b>     | <b>Oldham Council</b>                     |
| <b>Paul Tinsley</b>         | <b>Director of Education Skills and Early Years</b>                 | <b>Oldham Council</b>                     |
| <b>Andrea Edmondson</b>     | <b>Head of Quality and Safeguarding</b>                             | <b>Greater Manchester Integrated Care</b> |
| <b>Joanne Whittingham</b>   | <b>Service Lead for Early Years and Early Help Pathways (CAHMS)</b> | <b>Pennine Care</b>                       |
| <b>Janine Day</b>           | <b>Operations Director</b>                                          | <b>Early Break Substance Misuse</b>       |
| <b>Andrea Weir</b>          | <b>Senior Commissioning and Partnerships Manager</b>                | <b>Oldham Council</b>                     |

|                            |                                      |                            |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Laura Windsor Welsh</b> | <b>Strategic Locality Lead</b>       | <b>Action Together</b>     |
| <b>Moira Fields</b>        | <b>Senior Housing Officer</b>        | <b>Oldham Council</b>      |
| <b>Katie Shoebridge</b>    | <b>North- West Oversight Manager</b> | <b>Youth Justice Board</b> |
|                            | <b>Councillor</b>                    |                            |
| <b>Rachel Medcalf</b>      | <b>Magistrate</b>                    |                            |

#### Appendix 4: Service Development Plan

| Priority Area           | Lead (to work alongside the YJS Head of Service) | By when | How will this improve outcomes for children in Oldham                                                                                                                                        | Progress |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Child Centered Policing | Cara Charlesworth                                |         | Children will receive a response from police in line with Child Centered Policing to achieve positive change, manage risk and increase safety and wellbeing.                                 |          |
|                         |                                                  |         | <b>Measure:</b><br><br>The number of children held overnight in police custody will decrease.<br><br>Children will report better relationships with the Police.                              |          |
| Serious Youth Violence  | Lorraine Kenny                                   |         | Children, victims and communities will feel safe and protected.<br><br>Children will receive the relevant support to prevent involvement, or further involvement, in serious youth violence. |          |

|                            |                          |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|                            |                          |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |
|                            |                          |  | <p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>There will be a wider remit into the Oldham Prevention Panel to identify children at risk or involvement into serious youth violence.</p> <p>The rate of serious youth violence in Oldham will decrease.</p> <p>The number of Serious Incident Notifications in Oldham will decrease.</p> |  |
| <b>First Time Entrants</b> | <b>Cara Charlesworth</b> |  | Children will be supported at the earliest opportunity to prevent entering, or further contact with the Youth Justice System                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |
|                            |                          |  | <p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>All decisions made regarding children in possession of a knife will be</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |

|                                                   |                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                            |  |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|                                                   |                            |  | <p>in line with Knife Crime Guidance.</p> <p>The rate of first time entrants into the criminal justice system will remain below all comparative family groups.</p>         |  |
| <b>Children Remanded and Sentenced to Custody</b> | <b>Michelle Bernasconi</b> |  | <p>Children will not be unnecessarily exposed to custody.</p>                                                                                                              |  |
|                                                   |                            |  | <p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>The number of children remanded in custody will reduce.</p> <p>The number of children receiving custodial sentences will reduce.</p>             |  |
| <b>Victims</b>                                    | <b>Clare Griffiths</b>     |  | <p>Victims of crimes committed by children will have access to an enhanced offer from Oldham YJS in line with their identified needs and any protected characteristics</p> |  |

|                                                                  |                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|                                                                  |                            |  | <p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>There will be an Enhance Victim Mentoring Programme in place within Oldham YJS.</p> <p>The number of victims receiving support from Oldham YJS will increase.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
| <p><b>Quality Assurance</b><br/><b>Workforce Development</b></p> | <p><b>YJS Managers</b></p> |  | <p>Improvements to service delivery will be responsive and based on quantitative and qualitative data to ensure that the partnership offer is aligned to observations and trends in data.</p> <p>Oldham YJS will have a workforce skilled to deliver outstanding service to children, families and victims.</p> <p><b>Measure:</b></p> <p>The service will not assess “requires improvement” or “inadequate” within any quality assurance activity.</p> |  |

|                       |                |  |                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
|-----------------------|----------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|                       |                |  | The 5Ps Model will be embedded within assessments and plans for all children.                                                                                                                 |  |
| Children Looked After | Nick Whitbread |  | Children will not receive disproportionate outcomes based on their lived experiences.                                                                                                         |  |
|                       |                |  | <b>Measure:</b><br><br>The number of children referred into the service for incidents within care homes will reduce.<br><br>The number of children looked after working with YJS will reduce. |  |



**Report to COUNCIL**

## **Update on Actions from Council**

**Portfolio Holder: Various**

**Officer Contact:** Heather Moore, Assistant Director of Governance

**Report Author:** Peter Thompson, Constitutional Services  
[peter.thompson@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:peter.thompson@oldham.gov.uk)

**16<sup>th</sup> September 2026**

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### **Reason for Decision**

The decision is for Members to note updates on actions from the Council meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2026 and any updated responses from meetings earlier in this municipal year.

### **Executive Summary**

This report provides information to Council on actions taken at the most recent Council meetings.

### **Recommendations**

Council is asked to: Note the report.

## **Update on Actions from Council**

### **1 Background**

- 1.1 This report sets out the actions that officers have taken on motions approved at the Council meetings on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2026 and which also informs Members of any updated responses to motions approved at previous meetings in this municipal year.

### **2 Current Position**

- 2.1 The current position on actions is set out in the table at Appendix 1.

### **3 Options/Alternatives**

- 3.1 N/A

### **4 Preferred Option**

- 4.1 N/A

### **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 N/A

### **6 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 N/A

### **7 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 N/A

### **8 Equality Impact, including Implications for Children and Young People**

- 8.1 N/A

### **9 Key Decision**

- 9.1 No

### **10 Key Decision Reference**

- 10.1 N/A

### **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

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1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act:

- The agenda and minutes of the Council meetings are available online at:  
<http://committees.oldham.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails>

## 12 **Appendices**

- 12.1 Appendix 1 – Current Position  
Appendix 2 – Fair and Affordable School Uniforms for Oldham Families – Reply from Department for Education

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We are the department for **opportunity**

Dear Sir,

**RE: Oldham Group Motion (Council 15<sup>th</sup> July 2026) – School Uniform Provision**

Thank you for your email of 4 August, addressed to Secretary of State, about Oldham Council's motion on school uniforms and for welcoming the statutory limit on branded school uniform items introduced through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.

I am sure you will appreciate that the Secretary of State receives a large amount of correspondence and is unable to reply to each one personally. It is for this reason I have been asked to reply. I apologise for the delay in our response.

The recently updated statutory guidance on the cost of school uniform is already clear that - parents should be able to purchase generic items of uniform from a range of retailers, giving them choice and value for money.

Where branded items are optional schools should also ensure that wearing an equivalent unbranded version of that item is also permitted.

The guidance is also clear that for any branded items schools should avoid entering into single-supplier contracts unless regular tendering competitions are run, allowing more than one supplier to compete for the contract and ensuring that best value for money is secured. Schools are required to have regard to the guidance when developing and implementing their school uniform policies.

The department therefore has no current plans to issue further national guidance specifically on supply arrangements for uniform items that fall outside the statutory limit. We will, however, continue to engage regularly with stakeholders, including representatives of parents, pupils

and the school uniform sector, to monitor implementation of the new limit.

Thank you again for taking the time to write on this matter.

Your correspondence has been allocated reference number 2026-0082931. If you need to respond to us, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe> and quote your reference number.

Yours sincerely

**J WATSON**  
**Ministerial and Public Communications Division**

Web: <https://www.education.gov.uk>

X (formerly Twitter): <https://www.x.com/educationgovuk>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/educationgovuk>

As part of our commitment to improving the service we provide to our customers, we are interested in hearing your views and would welcome your comments via our website at:  
<https://form.education.gov.uk/service/TOCMTfeedback>.

Thank you for your help.



We are the department for **opportunity**

### Actions from the Council meeting on 16 July 2025

| Council<br>Agenda item                                                           | Action/Issue                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Responsible<br>Member/Officer | Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Completed <br>In progress  |
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| Opposition<br>Motion 3:<br>Request for a<br>Revision of<br>Don't Trash<br>Oldham | <p>This Motion asks for a revision of the 'Don't Trash Oldham' Policy with regards to Gully Clearing</p> <p>Gully cleaning and Don't Trash Oldham Policy. Director of Environment to provide information to Councillor Byrne</p> | Nasir Dad                     | <p>Information provided to Councillor Byrne two active vehicles - one is our permanent vehicle, one is leased. It is our intention to maintain a minimum of two vehicles at any time given the demand for gulley cleaning across the borough</p> <p>To date, 18,000 gulleys have been treated – a number of those treated need to be revisited due to more substantial works being needed (significant blockage / collapse or blocked by parked car on the day we did the work in the area). This will take place once the current wards have been completed and 1 wagon will begin to address blockages/repairs and those that were inaccessible. HM has asked for timescales for this.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member committed to bringing this back to a future council meeting.</p> |                                                                                                               |

**Actions from the Council meeting on 12 November 2025**

| <b>Council Agenda item</b>                                                        | <b>Action/Issue</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Responsible Member/Officer</b> | <b>Update</b>                                                                                                               | <b>Completed ✓<br/>In progress ○</b> |
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| Notice of Administration Business – Motion 1: Improving Parking Provisions at ROH | 1. Request that Oldham Council works collaboratively with the Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust (NCA) and relevant partners to explore options for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a multi-storey or expanded car park at or near Royal Oldham Hospital;</li> <li>Introducing fair and affordable parking arrangements for patients attending A&amp;E, those with regular appointments, and NHS staff;</li> <li>Creating dedicated parking directly opposite the A&amp;E department for patients attending A&amp;E only;</li> <li>Improving access and facilities for wheelchair users and those with mobility needs.</li> </ol> | Mike Barker                       | The Deputy Chief Executive (Health and Care) has met with Defibrillators Saves Lives to progress the actions of the Council | ✓                                    |
|                                                                                   | 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Chief Executive                   | NCA undertook to report on this matter to the Joint Scrutiny Committee for the Northern Care Alliance                       | ✓                                    |
|                                                                                   | 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Chief Executive                   | Letters sent to Oldham's MP's. Jim McMahon indicated his ongoing support                                                    | ✓                                    |

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| <p>Notice of Opposition Business:<br/>Motion 1:<br/>Tackling the Anti-Social Use of Off-Road Motorbikes, E-Bikes and E-Scooters</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol> | <p>1. &amp; 2. Chief Executive</p> <p>3.&amp; 4. Mike Barker &amp; Nasir Dad</p> | <p>Letters and reminders sent, awaiting replies</p> <p>Officers liaising with Oldham's housing providers to increase awareness of the dangers associated with the anti-social use of off-road motorbike, e-scooters, and e-bikes.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to expedite this resolution</p> | <p>○</p> |
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**Actions from the Council meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

| Council<br>Agenda item                                                                  | Action/Issue                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Responsible<br>Member/Officer | Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Completed ✓<br>In progress ○ |
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| Motion 2 –<br>Administration<br>Business: Fairer<br>parking at<br>Manchester<br>Airport | <b>RESOLVED</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Council formally supports Jim McMahon MP's campaign for fairer and more transparent parking charges at Manchester Airport.</li> <li>2. That the Council requests that the Chief Executive write to Manchester Airport Group urging:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A review of the current charging structure with a view to reducing costs.</li> <li>○ Improved signage and introduction of a “tap-out” payment option at exit points.</li> <li>○ Publication of data on income from drop-off and pick-up charges.</li> <li>○ A fair and accessible appeals process that does not increase penalties for unsuccessful appeals.</li> <li>○ That the Council requests that the Chief Executive write to the Mayor of Greater Manchester and Leaders of the other 9 GM Local Authorities to share this motion seek wider regional support.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> | Chief Executive               | <p>Letters and emails sent awaiting replies.</p> <p>Further letters and emails forwarded still awaiting appropriate replies.</p> <p>Similar Motions proposed and approved at other Greater Manchester Authorities</p> | ○                            |

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| <p>Opposition Motion 3: Ensuring Statutory Scrutiny and Enforceability for Places for Everyone Masterplans</p> | <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>2) That the Council's Monitoring Officer shall:<br/>Confirm the masterplan's progression to SPD status within 3 months.<br/>Advise on any procedural adjustments.<br/>Ensure no non-statutory "agreement" precedes SPD adoption.</li> <li>3) That 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.</li> <li>4) That Officers be requested to report progress to the Cabinet meeting, scheduled to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026, including timelines for consultation and adoption.</li> </ol> | <p>Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive</p> | <p>Reports presented to Scrutiny Board and Cabinet.</p> <p>An update report is being presented to Council on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2026.</p> | <p>○</p> |
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#### Actions from the Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026

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| <p>Administration Motion 2: Tackling the anti-social use of Fireworks</p> | <p>Resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To request that the Chief Executive write to the three MPs representing the Borough of Oldham, asking them to continue supporting Yasmin Qureshi</li> </ol> | <p>Chief Executive</p> | <p>Letters forwarded to the Borough's three MP's and to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government</p> | <p>○</p> |
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|  | <p>MP's Bill on Fireworks which would introduce a maximum decibel level of 90dB.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. To request that the Chief Executive 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.</li> <li>3. Renew our call for Government to introduce legislation to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Limit the maximum noise level of fireworks sold for private use to 90dB.</li> <li>b. Review current laws on sale and use, including requiring purchasers to state when, how and where fireworks will be used.</li> <li>c. Strengthen restrictions on how, when and where fireworks can be purchased, including online sales and transaction volumes.</li> <li>d. Restrict sales to 'all year round' retailers to reduce risks from temporary 'pop-up' sellers.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Write to all local event venues reminding them of the law and exploring the possibility of requiring registration/licensing for firework use.</li> <li>5. Introduce a requirement for community notification of firework use by venues hosting private events.</li> <li>6. Require all public firework displays within the borough to be advertised in advance,</li> </ol> |  |  |  |
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|  | allowing residents to take precautions for animals and vulnerable people. |  |  |  |
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### Actions from the Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2026

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| Notice of Motion 3<br>Fair and Affordable School Uniforms for Oldham Families | <p>Council resolved to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To write to all schools, governing bodies, and multi-academy trusts operating in Oldham, urging them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Avoid exclusive single-supplier arrangements.</li> <li>• Permit multiple retailers to stock any branded items that remain compulsory.</li> <li>• Ensure uniforms are affordable, durable, and widely accessible; including generic items not covered by the statutory cap.</li> <li>• Expand and actively promote pre-loved and recycled uniform schemes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of their compliance with the statutory cap on compulsory branded</li> </ul> </li> </ol> | Chief Executive | A reply from J. Watson, Ministerial and Public Communications Division, Department for Education is attached at Appendix 3 | ✓ |
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|  | <p>items under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether they have an exclusive supplier arrangement for any remaining branded or generic items, and the reasons for it.</li> <li>• The steps taken to ensure value for money and quality for parents on items outside the statutory cap.</li> <li>• The measures that are in place to support low-income families and promote uniform reuse.</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting fair competition between suppliers.</li> <li>• Maximising choice and quality for parents and carers.</li> <li>• Supporting uniform recycling, reuse, and swap shop initiatives.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> |  |  |  |
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|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 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.</li> <li>2. 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.</li> <li>3. 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.</li> </ol> |  |  |  |
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#### **Actions from the Extraordinary Council meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2026**

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| Leader of the Council (Minute 4) | Council resolved that the Monitoring Officer would write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, regarding the Council's governance arrangements. | Chief Executive | A reply from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, is awaited | ○ |
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