COUNCIL
17/06/2020 at 6.00 pm

Present: The Mayor – Councillor G. Alexander (Chair)

Councillors Ahmad, Akhtar, Al-Hamdani, Ali, Alyas, Ball, M Bashforth, S Bashforth, Briggs, Brownridge, Byrne, Chadderton, Chauhan, Cosgrove, Curley, Davis, Dean, Fielding, Garry, C. Gloster, H. Gloster, Goodwin, Hamblett, Haque, Harkness, Harrison, Hewitt, Hobin, Hudson, Hulme, F Hussain, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Jabbar, Jacques, Leach, Malik, McLaren, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Phythian, Price, Roberts, Salamat, Shah, Sheldon, Shuttleworth, Stretton, Surjan, Sykes, Taylor, Toor, Ur-Rehman and Williams

1 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Consultation had been undertaken with Group Leaders to vary the order of the agenda due to the changes to the regulations. Councillor Fielding MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED an amendment to Council Procedure Rule 15.5 and proposed that timings would includes the extensions, therefore, any member wishing to speak would be granted 4 minutes 30 second and those Members with a right of reply 6 minutes and 30 second. On being put to the vote, this was AGREED.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Williamson and Councillor A. Hussain.

2 ATTENDANCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Due to the current pandemic and the virtual meeting, a roll call of elected members present was taken and at the same time, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, elected members declared the following interests:

The Mayor informed the meeting that the Standards Committee had granted a dispensation to allow all members to vote on Item 19, Members Allowances Scheme, Report of the Director of Legal Services. All members declared a pecuniary interest in this item, but the dispensation was applicable which allowed members to participate and vote on Item 19.

Councillor C. Gloster declared a pecuniary interest at Item 11d and personal interest at Item 12, by virtue of his employment by Greater Manchester Police.
Councillor H. Gloster declared a pecuniary interest at Item 11d and a personal interest in Item 12, by virtue of her husband's employment by Greater Manchester Police.
Councillor Garry declared a pecuniary interest at Item 11d and Item 12, by virtue of her husband's employment by Greater Manchester Police.
Councillor S. Bashforth declared a personal interest by virtue of his appointment to MioCare and a pecuniary interest at Item 11d by virtue of his appointment as a Director of MioCare.

Councillor Chauhan declared a personal interest at Item 11d by virtue of his appointment to MioCare.
Councillor Hamblett declared a personal interest at Item 11d by virtue of his appointment to MioCare.
Councillor Al-Hamdani declared a personal interest at Item 15.

3 **THE MAYORALTY AND MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL 2020/21**

Consideration was given to a report to the Head of Democratic Services which advised of the implications of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 for the Mayoralty and for meetings between May 2020 and May 2021.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Coronavirus Act 2020 (the "Act") came into force on 25th March 2020. Amongst other matters, the Act provided that the ordinary election of Councillors in England that would otherwise be held on the ordinary day of election in 2020 wold be held instead on 7th May 2021, the ordinary day of election in 2021, and that any Councillor who would otherwise had retired on the fourth day after the ordinary day of election in 2020 would have their term of office extended accordingly.

Subsequently, the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (the "2020 Regulations") came into force on 4th April 2020. Included in the provisions therein, local authorities were permitted to hold such meetings as they may determine and, should a Council not hold an annual meeting, such appointments that would otherwise had been made at the annual meeting would continue until the next annual meeting or until such time as the Council determined.

Members were reminded that the Annual Meeting of Council scheduled for 20th May 2020 had not been convened. In accordance with S4 of the 2020 Regulations, the terms of office of Councillor Ginny Alexander as Mayor and of Councillor Jenny Harrison as Deputy Mayor would therefore continue to the Annual Meeting of the Council to be held in May 2021 or such other time as the Council might determine.

Similarly, current Council committee memberships would continue to the Annual Meeting of the Council to be held in May 2021 or such other time as the Council might determine, subject to the political balance considerations required by the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. A report which gave consideration to political balance and the opportunity to vary some appointments was elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED that the implications of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and

Wales) Regulations 2020 for the Mayoralty and for meetings of the Council between May 2020 and May 2021 be noted.

4 **TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 8TH JANUARY 2020 AND 26TH FEBRUARY 2020 BE SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 8th January 2020 and 26th February 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

5 **TO DEAL WITH MATTERS WHICH THE MAYOR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

6 **TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Mayor and all Elected Members of the Council offered their condolences to all families who lost loved ones during the pandemic, both Covid related and non-Covid.

Council held a minute's silence.

The Mayor made reference to the recent deaths of former members of the Council, Fred Yates and Angie Farrell.

Councillor Sykes paid tribute to the work of Fred Yates and Angie Farrell.
Councillor Brownridge paid tribute to the work of Fred Yates.
Councillor S. Bashforth paid tribute to the work of Angie Farrell.

Council held a minute's silence.

7 **TO RECEIVE AND NOTE PETITIONS RECEIVED RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Mayor advised that two petitions had been received for noting by Council:

<u>People and Place</u>

Reference 2020-02: Petition regarding Proposed Time Restricted Parking on Beal Lane, Shaw (Shaw) received on 9th January 2020 with 113 signatures.

Reference 2020-04: Petition requesting the Re-opening of Bolton Street, Oldham OL4 1BW (St. Mary's) received on 28th February 2020 with 251 signatures.

RESOLVED that the petitions received since the last meeting of the Council be noted.

8 **ALLOCATION OF PORTFOLIOS TO CABINET MEMBERS 2020/21 AND DETERMINATION OF THE DELEGATION OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS**

RESOLVED that the appointment of Deputy Leaders, Cabinet Members, Deputy Cabinet Members, the allocation of portfolios

to Cabinet Members and the determination of delegations to Executive Functions for 2020/2021 be noted as outlined below.

Councillor Sean Fielding	Leader of the Council Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills
Councillor Eddie Moores	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Councillor Shaid Mushtaq	Cabinet Member for Education
Councillor Zahid Chauhan	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care
Councillor Arooj Shah	Statutory Deputy Leader Cabinet Member for COVID-19 Response
Councillor Barbara Brownridge	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture
Councillor Hannah Roberts	Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Abdul Jabbar MBE	Deputy Leader Cabinet Member for Finance and Green
Councillor Amanda Chadderton	Cabinet Member for HR and Corporate Reform
Councillor Mohon Ali	Deputy Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills
Councillor Valerie Leach	Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Councillor Chris Goodwin	Deputy Cabinet Member for Education
Councillor Marie Bashforth	Deputy Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care
Councillor Cath Ball	Deputy Cabinet Member for COVID-19 Response
Councillor Ateeque Ur-Rehman	Deputy Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture
Councillor George Hulme	Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance and Green
Councillor Steve Williams	Deputy Cabinet Member for HR and Corporate Reform

9 **OPPOSITION NOMINATIONS TO THE SHADOW CABINET**

2020/21

RESOLVED that the appointment of the Opposition Leader and the Shadow Cabinet and asset set out below be noted:

Councillor Howard Sykes MBE (Opposition Leader)	Economy and Skills HR & Corporate Reform
Councillor Garth Harkness	Education
Councillor Hazel Gloster	Children and Young People
Councillor Louie Hamblett	Health and Social Care
Councillor Dave Murphy	Neighbourhoods and Culture
Councillor Diane Williamson	COVID-19 Recovery
Councillor Chris Gloster (Opposition	Finance and Low Carbon Deputy Leader)
Councillor Sam Al-Hamdani	Housing and Homelessness

10 **YOUTH COUNCIL**

There were no items submitted by the Youth Council.

11 **QUESTIONS TIME**

11a Public Question Time

The Mayor advised that the next item on the agenda was Public Question Time. Questions had been received from members of the public and would be taken in the order in which they had been received. Council was advised that if the questioner was not present, the question would be read out by the Mayor.

The following questions were submitted:

1. Question received from Michael McLean via email:

   "How many miles of roads in Oldham have had the potholes fixed whilst the roads were quiet?"

   Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture responded that generally filling potholes was just an interim measure pending investment to the highway network to resurfacing using a number of appropriate surfacing techniques. The Council was currently as the start of the second financial year of the implementation of a Council funded £12m Highways Investment Programme over three years which aims to completely resurface and overlay existing surfacing to economically and effectively improve the overall condition of the highway network. In terms of improvements, the overall condition had been measured:

   - Green condition – or highways not in need to any works, had

imporved by 23% of the entire network form 36% to 59% - this equated to approximately 180 km of the network having improved;

- Amber condition – or highways not needing work for 3 to 5 years had reduced significantly down to 21% of the network overall.

Roads maintained in the green or amber categories would need little or no subsequent pothole repairs for many years, if maintained in those categories using the appropriate resurfacing techniques.

2. Question received from Charles Garrity via email:

"I refer to the announcement of the proposed full council meeting for 17th June 2020 that contains a PDF document, this document itemises unanswered questions from the public. Mr. Karl Bardsley asked what was the total sum that was borrowed to finance the Town Hall cinema project. The reply given by the leader of the council Sean Fielding, that there was no money borrowed for the Town Hall conversion project appears to be untrue. At that time I read a press release that the financing of that project was as follows £10m was taken from Council reserves, a further large proportion of the cost was provided from the regeneration capital fund. The regeneration capital fund was mainly funded by prudential borrowing, (it is well documented in council minutes that regeneration capital relies heavily on prudential borrowing). The press statement also said that a further sum of over £5m was borrowed and this would be repaid by income generated from the project. I would ask Cllr Fielding for the sake of clarity to openly substantiate his answer by giving an itemised statement of how and where the money came from for the project."

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills reiterated the response that had been provided to the previous question. The Council did not undertake any borrowing to support the conversion of the Old Town Hall to a cinema and restaurant complex. Although the Council's regeneration programme provided for the use of prudential borrowing, this did not necessarily lead to the Council taking on additional debt to finance particular projects. In the case of the Old Town Hall project, the Council's overall Treasury and Capital position at the time allowed for the scheme to be financed from cash-backed reserves rather than borrowed funds.

3. Question received from Ian Manners via email:

"I would like to commend the hardworking employees of Oldham council for all the good work they have done for Oldham during the coronavirus pandemic. The virus will have imposed an extra cost on the people of Oldham therefore, I ask how much does OMBC reckon dealing with coronavirus has cost local council tax payers and how much of this expense has the Government undertaken to pay back to Oldham and when has it promised to pay it back?"

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Green took the opportunity to record his

thanks to staff in dealing with the response to the pandemic. Councillor Jabbar responded that it was difficult to assess how much the coronavirus had cost the Council so far as it was a rapidly moving position. However, an assessment of increased costs and lost income was undertaken during May. This estimated that the extra financial pressures related to April and May were £7.8m of additional expenditure with a further pressure of £9.2m from lost income – a total of £17m. This included some front-loaded costs that impacted right at the start of the financial year. The current estimate over the full year, the extra cost and lost income would total £33.5m. A further £9.6m of Council Tax and Business Rates losses would have a budgetary impact for 2021/22. The Council had so far received £14.2m of Central Government to support these additional costs. Further funding was expected However it was now considered unlikely that Government funding would fully recompense the Council for all the extra spending and lost income. The position was, of course, being closely monitored and updated as new information became available.

4. Question received from Syed Maruf Ali via email:

"Oldham Tax payers money was allocated to Blue Coat and Compton house School for expansion, so that residents of Oldham can access good/outstanding attainment School. Can the Cabinet members responsible for education share with us what percentage of pupils from Blue Coat and Compton House attends from out of Oldham borough? (Year 7 to year 11). What percentage of disadvantages/Free School meal and SEND students attends Blue Coat and Compton House School? We know that Poor white British children now come out of our schools with worse qualifications than equally poor children in any other major ethnic group. They do less homework and are more likely to miss school than other groups. We don't know how much of the under-performance is due to poor attitudes to school, a lack of work ethic or weak parenting. What is certain is that great schools make a significant difference in turning poor children's education around. The problem of poor, white British under attainment is real and the gap between those children and their better off class mates starts in their earliest school years and then widens as they get older. However, we also know that the effect of attending an outstanding school is transformational for poor children because it doubles their chance of success at GCSE. Do the cabinet members agree with me that more places should be allocated to poor white British children especially white British boys to Blue Coat and Compton House School? To improve the attainment of poor white British children in Oldham I believe the school should change their admission criteria to:
25% should be faith based reserved for practising Christian children. All Christian denominations.
25% places should be reserved for children from the other 5 faiths represented in Oldham (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish.
10% places allocated to Poor white British children
10% places allocated to white British boys
20% places allocated to pupils living within 2 miles radius of the

school
10% places allocated to out of Oldham.

Councillor Shaid Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Education responded that the percentage of pupils from outside of Oldham were 32% at Blue Coat and 27.6% at Crompton House. Percentage of free schools meals were 5.1% at Blue Coat and 6.4% at Crompton House. SEND was 5.9% at Blue Coat and Crompton House 4.5%. With regard to the statement on Admissions as a Local Authority, the Council did not control the Admissions Policy of either school as they were academies. Schools were required to review and consult on their admissions policies on a 7-year cycle and as a Local Authority the Council endeavoured to have input to ensure that the policies were fair and reflected local needs.

5. Question received from Mick Harewood via email:

"One of the most positive things, to have come out of the Covid19 crisis, is the response by our community, and the readiness for people to volunteer, to help their neighbours. It has highlighted the work that is being done by voluntary organisations, and their unpaid volunteers, not just during this crisis, but before the crisis, and on into the future. Can I ask, if the council could consider a way of acknowledging and rewarding their regular and long-term efforts, perhaps with some kind of awards event?"

Councillor Arooj Shah, Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded the contribution of volunteers to community groups had been incredible and had been central to Oldham's response. Members from across the Chamber felt proud. The Cabinet Member had written to many groups to say thank you on behalf of Oldham. It would not stop there. This week, as part of Small Charities Week, the Council wanted to join in the already scheduled Appreciation Day on Saturday to say thank-you, not only to the new volunteers and mutual aid organisations that focussed on supporting those affected by Coronavirus, but also the hundreds of voluntary organisations who had supported Oldham people for years. This Saturday, leaders from across the health and local government system would be saying thank you to Oldham's community, voluntary organisations and volunteers. In the future, the Council would be looking to work with community partners to find a way to acknowledge and say thank-you for everything that had been done by the hundreds of people who had gotten residents through this tough time. Traditionally the Council would look an awards ceremony but with social distancing and the sheer numbers involved, it would need to be approached differently, but there would be more days (virtual or physical) to recognise the people had done. The Council wanted this culture of helping each other to remain part of life in Oldham. In Oldham, people looked after each other.

At this point in the meeting the Mayor advised that the time limit for this item had expired.

RESOLVED that the questions and responses provided be noted.

11b Questions to Leader and Cabinet

The Leader of the Main Opposition, Councillor Sykes, raised the following two questions:

Question 1: Indices of Deprivation in Oldham Borough

"It is with deep regret, that a reliable study has shown how Oldham Council is still not dealing with deprivation locally. And this is before the Covid-19 world we now all live in. This is one league table we don't want to rise the ranks of. The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 provides very detailed information on how well an authority is doing based on: income, employment, education, health, crime, housing and someone's living environment. In terms of a real change, Oldham Borough as slid backwards. We are by no means improving. Before you all shout 'Coalition Cuts', let me put this into perspective for all members present. Oldham Borough has risen from the 27th most deprived local authority in England to the 16th most deprived. Almost ten places worse. This is in only four years from 2015 to 2019. Additionally, Oldham Borough is in the top five places that have worsened over that four-year period. Other areas include Walsall, Blackburn with Darwen, Halton and Burnley. The Council which has skipped ten points in local depravation and has been run by the Labour group, uninterrupted for the best part of ten years now. I wondered if the Leader has a more articulate excuse than simply 'Austerity' as to why the Labour are failing residents of Oldham Borough?"

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that it was disingenuous to direct the position at Oldham Labour and that much had contributed to the table. The Leader added that there was much which contributed to the Authority's position in the league tables. Oldham had traditional relied heavily on public sector employment which had been decimated under the Coalition Government and continued under the Conservatives. The authority had been hit by disproportionate level of government cuts against which impeded the ability for any work to conducted that would mediate any forms of deprivation and poverty and this was going to become more challenging post the Covid-19 crisis. It was suggested that more austerity would follow to repay the money paid to businesses and those supported those who had not been able to work during the period. The Leader added that more austerity would not help a place like Oldham improve its position in the league tables. There were committed local leaders, including those in the Council Chamber, who wanted to do the right thing by residents in the borough and to help the communities where members lived and represented and for resources to be directed to those most in need, help them rise out of deprivation, poverty and provided with the tools needed to provide for themselves in terms of good jobs, local infrastructure and public services. The Council had set out an ambitious plan under Creating a Better Place which would invest not just in physical infrastructure but also invested

in people in the creation of jobs and apprenticeships and assisted in having a good quality of life. It was hoped that the opposition parties of the Council would support the investment. The Leader added that locally made decisions would be made but only with the money needed in order for them to be implemented in a meaningful way. The Leader welcomed the Leader of the Main Opposition's support in call for the vires connects in the LGA directly from the Government.

Question 2: Oldham Definition of Local Spending

"As you may be aware, it is an aim of Oldham Council to spend money and procure services with local business. Business local to Oldham Borough. Our procurement strategy is supposed to provide a plan for Oldham Borough to see value in all its activity. It is also supposed to provide the maximum benefit possible to local people – which is even more important now in the Covid-19 world we live in. The total local spend for the year 2019/20 was just over £126 million. That is roughly 52% of the nearly £243 million we spend as a Council on procurement of services. It is the Liberal Democrat group view that this Council should aim as a minimum for at least 60% of a local spend for next year. Local spending and the millions of pounds mentioned before are defined as any business with an OL postcode. This is where the problem resides. The OL postcode does not restrict itself to Oldham Borough. In fact, the OL postcode misses out most of Failsworth completely, the ward our Council Leader represents. The OL postcode does however include parts of Tameside, most of Rochdale and includes places like Bacup. Now I like Bacup but would never describe that as local and neither would most people. That is to measure procurement in the real Oldham Borough, and not have a system based on a post code devised by Royal Mail during the 1960's."

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that he would need to see the document to which was referred. The Leader responded that local spend in Oldham was measured in terms of postal codes within the borough and included a breakdown which wards employees lived so that recruitment could be targeted to help spread the wealth that the Council had in terms of its salaries budget to all wards in the borough. The ambition had been for a number of years, and in the manifesto, to target 60% of local spend in the same way, which was in common with the Liberal Democrat. The percentage now was 52% which was a significant increase on where the authority was a short time ago. The Leader welcomed support to get more local firms onto the Council's procurement lists in order for them to apply for contacts and put money into the local economy. The Leader added that the report produced by the Centre for Local Economic Studies which had highlighted Oldham as one of the best local authorities for local send and this publication would also answer many of the questions raised by the Leader of the Main Opposition.

Councillor Curley, on behalf of the Conservative Group asked a question related to supporting businesses in the borough and referred to Tommyfield Market. The market had been eclipsed by Bury Market which had deferred charges and asked the Leader of the waiver or deferral of rents for market traders could be looked at to help traders

bounce back.

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that the markets, like many local businesses, had had to close in response to the pandemic. The Council had worked closely and maintained contact with the traders and the throughout the lockdown period and ensure information had been shared and more recently worked with them to prepare for reopening. The Council had written to the traders to explain the position on the collection of rents. All traders had been encouraged to apply for the Small Business Grant Fund which provided a cash grant of up to £10,000. The Council was aware that two traders had unfortunately left the market during the lockdown,but had received four enquiries from new traders who wanted to be part of the re-opening. The Outdoor Markets had begun re-opening on a phased basis.

The Mayor reminded the meeting that the Council had agreed that, following the Leaders' allocated questions, questions would be taken in an order which reflected the political balance of the Council.

1. Councillor Toor asked the following question:

   "It is clear that the Covid-19 pandemic will have a significant adverse impact on Oldham's communities and Council and other public services' spending plans. Can the Leader of the Council tell us what this means for Creating a Better Place?"

   Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that the 'Creating a Better Place' strategic framework had been approved by Cabinet in January 2020 before the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in the UK. The framework focused on building more homes for Oldham's residents, creating new jobs through town centre regeneration and ensured Oldham was a great place to visit with lots of family friendly and accessible places to go. In light of the pandemic, the Council had to respond with the provision of significant funding support to ensure the safety and welfare of Oldham's local communities This had resulted in a serious funding impact on the Council's five year financial plans, and therefore, it was wholly to review 'Creating a Better Place' to reconsider whether the programme was able to respond to support the post CV-19 recovery plans, whether the use of public capital funds was still justified and whether the original savings proposals were at risk, or could be accelerated / enhanced in any way. The results of the review would be fed back to Cabinet for further consideration in alignment with the Council's five-year financial plans.

2. Councillor Shuttleworth asked the following question:

   "On 29 April Education Secretary Gavin Williamson reportedly told the Parliamentary Education Committee that the Department of Education would write to councils and academy trusts that week to give them 'clear indications' of why they are to receive. This comment relates to the national distribution of some 2,000,000 laptops at a cost of £85m to support some disadvantaged year 10

pupils, care leavers and pupils with a social worker. Mr. Williamson was reported as saying: 'We expect the first laptops to be arriving at the end of May with the majority delivered in June'. Would the relevant Cabinet Member confirm how many laptops have been received, if any, and when, and if the numbers provided meet the demand?"

Councillor Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Education, responded that Oldham had received 1,036 devices for children with social workers and care leavers. These arrived on 11 June 2020. Currently, it appeared that there were enough devices to meet the need under the criteria set by the Department for Education.

3. Question received from Councillor Phythian:

"Many residents have complained to me about the lack of a decent bus service in Royton North particularly the 402 and 412. Since the operator has changed they have taken off routes vital to many elderly and vulnerable people which is causing distress and frustration. Can the relevant cabinet member reassure residents we can get these bus routes reinstated?"

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture responded that the main issue with the services had been the significant increase in the cost of providing subsidised bus services following the decision by Manchester Community Transport (MCT) to close down their business when their Oldham contracts ended in April 2020.MCT was an operator with a track record of providing very competitive tender bids. TfGM sought to maintain existing service levels, but other operators prices were significantly higher and, despite negotiating with them, TfGM could not get them to bring the costs down to an acceptable level. This, coupled with price increases on other subsidised services in the area, meant TfGM had to review these services, the new 402 route being the outcome. Given the circumstances which surrounded this network change, the services were unlikely to go back to how they were as this would require significant additional funding. However, the subsidised bus network was always under review with a view to adjustments being made to improve the situation where possible. If the elected member would like to share details of where the complaints were coming from, TfGM would be asked to look into them.

4. Question received from Councillor C. Gloster:

"I am delighted that Wi-Fi has now been made available to attendees of funeral services at Hollinwood Crematorium. At a time when very few mourners are permitted to attend such services in person this will now permit the transmission of services to those who would have wished to attend in different circumstances. Wesley Media or a similar music and audio system like Oracle were to be installed, music selection would be far easier, and the system provides the ability to record the service. Please could I ask the relevant Cabinet Member to ask officers to investigate the installation of Wesley Media, Oracle or similar, and to

authorise the installation of such a system as soon as possible? This would ensure that Oldham provides the very best facilities for the conduct of funeral services, and for the support of families and friends already grieving for their loved one. I would now like to make a second request to improve the facilities at the Hollinwood Crematorium. At present, music is being downloaded onto a private account owned by a crematorium operative and saved onto a computer owned by the Council. There is no Council facility to record the service. Please could I ask the relevant Cabinet Member to ask officers to investigate the installation of Wesley Media, Oracle or similar, and to authorise the installation of such a system as soon as possible? This would ensure that Oldham provides the very best facilities for the conduct of funeral services, and for the support of families and friends already grieving for their loved one."

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighourhoods and Culture responded that officers had researched the options around the use of both Wesley and Obitus music systems when the installation of webcasting was initially arranged from the Crematorium. However, the companies make a charge for installation, together with ongoing subscriptions for music and webcasting. For these reasons, together with the need for the swift installation, the decision had been made to support an inhouse solution. The system did have a facilities to record and would be looked into. Other options could be considered going forward, but whilst software already available in the Council enabled the service, the service was able to be provided at no additional cost to bereaved families and this was the Council's current priority. The webcast services had been very well received by families and funeral undertakers.

5. Question received from Councillor Taylor:

"Can the Cabinet Member for Finance tell us how many businesses have we been able to support through the various government funded schemes to support them during the Covid-19 pandemic and who can be helped through our local business support scheme?"

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Green responded that substantial help had been made available to businesses. A total of 3,803 business grants of £10,000 and £25,000 had been paid by the Council in the administration of Government's small business grant and retail, hospitality and leisure grant scheme, at a total cost of £43.235m. Expanded retail business rate relieve had been applied to 996 businesses at a totally value of £24.681m and nursery relief had been applied to 34 nurseries at a value of £281k. With regard to the Council's discretionary grant scheme funded by Central Government at a maximum value of £2.501m, the Phase 1 applications closed on 12th June. The first phase targeted businesses in multi-occupation premises, charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief, bed and breakfasts and market traders with fixed building costs.

Payments of £363k had been made with 29 companies awarded £10k, 13 companies awarded £5k and 4 companies awarded £2k. Other applications for this first phase of grant were being considered and eligible claims would be paid as quickly as possible. The first of the Phase 2 grants submissions was open until 22nd June to businesses in the following sectors – manufacturing, digital and creative, construction, logistics, events management with a rateable value of between £15,001 and £51,000 p.a. Once all requests had been reviewed, grant awards would be made.

6. Question received from Councillor Leach:

"The lack of collaboration of central government with local public health teams in the development of a testing and tracing programme is just one example of our overly centralised system of governance. Is this the more egregious recent example? Could the Leader of the Council outline actions of himself and other leaders in Greater Manchester to take advantage of the devolved authority the central government has granted Greater Manchester, and the real constraints in exercising these powers more widely?"

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that Greater Manchester and Oldham Council's ambition was to support the development of a world class Test and Trace Service, designed to control the Covid-19 virus and enable people to live a safer and normal life. The GM and Local Covid-19 Outbreak Control Plan would set out the GM and Local arrangements to control the transmission of the virus, manage the outbreaks and address certain acute associated impacts (consequence management). The GM Plan would complement the existing GM Multi-Agency Outbreak Plan by ensure that key management arrangements were in place across GM and each Local Authority with the intention to provide a common GM framework to support locality planning. Locally, the Oldham Outbreak Management Plant would be a stand along plan with would interface with GM and Public Health England (PHE) covering the national key themes:

1. Care Homes and Schools
2. High risk places, locations and communities
3. Local testing capacity
4. Contact tracing in complex settings
5. Data Integration
6. Vulnerable People
7. Local Boards/Governance

The local plan was currently being developed by the public health team to ensure robust roles and responsibilities were established with appropriate governance arrangements. This would include the integration of national, GM and local policies into a whole-system approach to reduce Covid-19 transmission, reduce impact and manage outbreaks. The Council was currently establishing an approach to impact/consequence management for complex settings such as mental health and emerging communities.

7. Question received from Councillor Briggs:

"Can the Cabinet Member for Education comment on how efficient was the government's voucher scheme for supplying Free School Meals and how he thinks families will manage over the summer holidays as this is now being withdrawn?"

Councillor Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Education responded that the National Voucher Scheme did experience some problems when it was first introduced as the demand on the system was very heavy and there were some delays. It was now understood that the scheme was working effectively and being used by schools where the provision of a meal was not possible due to factors such as parents self-isolating or not being able to collect a meal due to being in an 'at risk group'. National guidance was clear that the voucher scheme was for use where schools could not provide a meal for delivery or collection. Earlier this week, the Department for Education said families of children eligible for free school meals would be provided with a voucher 'to cover the full six-week summer holiday beginning next month, which schools will be able to order before the end of term'. Vouchers would be provided via the existing system run by Edenred, which would run until 'the end of the summer term'. Schools would be asked to put in orders for support over the summer holiday before the start of the holidays and guidance for schools would follow shortly. This was a u-turn from earlier in the week and related to the intervention of Marcus Rashford.

8. Question received from Councillor Murphy:

"For some time, Crompton Councillors and Council Officers have been working very hard to safeguard a much-needed car park in High Crompton. This has been ongoing for several years, and we are keen to make sure that all parties efforts do not go to waste. The area has been a hot spot for anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping and needs to be solved sooner rather than later. Unfortunately, the Council officer who was dealing with this issue has left the authority and a new officer taken over their caseload. With Covid-19 ever present, it appears that we have stalled, or slow progress is being made to complete the sale of the Council land. Please can I ask the Cabinet Member to investigate this matter and find out what is causing the hold-up?"

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture responded that work had not stopped or stalled – officers continued to work through a number of issues associated with the sale of the land, one of which included dealing with a restrictive covenant set by Manchester Diocese. It was anticipated that these issues would be resolved by late July and then the provision of providing free car parking spaces for the local community.

9. Question received from Councillor Ibrahim:

"Oldham Council recognised early in the crisis that care homes faced severe challenges and organised pioneering support

through the STCH Team. The support we put in place met all the requirements of the most recent government guidance long before it was issued. Could the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care outline the work of the team and the difference this made?"

Councillor Chauhan, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care responded and thanked all the hard work staff, partners and front-line workers and action taken in response to the pandemic under difficult circumstances. Oldham took the initiative prior to national guidance being received. The action meant that a multiple of professionals had been brought together for the provision of designated support for all care homes. Oldham was one of the first to introduce PPE, Covid testing for staff and residents, GP support, support advices, provision of pressure area care. The work had not been done in isolation but had brought all partners together, including district nurses, social care workers, nutritionists, therapists, assessments and management. The way that staff had worked together in an integrated way would be built upon.

At this point in the meeting the Mayor advised that the time limit for this item had expired.

RESOLVED that the questions and responses provided be noted.

11c Questions on Cabinet Minutes

Council were requested to note the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on the undermentioned dates and to receive any questions on any items within the minutes from members of the Council who were not members of the Cabinet and receive responses from Cabinet Members. The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 16th December 2019, 27th January 2020, 24th February 2020 and 23rd March 2020 were submitted.

Members raised the following questions:

Question received from Councillor Harkness:

"We on the Liberal Democrat benches thoroughly support any move by this authority and its partners to make this Council and this borough carbon neutral as quickly and effectively as possible. I have a two-part question. The first relates to Solar Farms and the second to renewable energy generation on this Borough's farms.

Please could we be updated on the progress of the recent application to build a solar farm at the Wrigley Head site and the proposal to investigate building a second solar farm at the Lower Slack Farm site?

Could we also be told how much generating capacity has been installed on our Borough's farms? We would like to know what is being done to encourage and to expedite further development?

I am thinking here of the creation of Solar Farms on farming land, of

the installation of solar panels on the roofs of farm buildings, the use of methane and biological waste, and small-scale hydro schemes, as well as the more-usual farm wind turbines."

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Green responded that the Council was keen to develop comprehensive green agenda to play it's part in carbon reduction. The Planning Application for the proposed solar farm at Wrigley Head had not yet been determined. The potential for a second solar farm at Lower Slack Farm has been investigated and had unfortunately proved not to be feasible at that site due to numerous constraints which included adverse topography and lack of grid connection points. Unfortunately, no specific data existed on renewable energy generating capacity installed on privately owned land. The principal of working with private landowners on renewable energy development was being looked into. A high-level study of the Northern Roots site had identified potential for a solar farm, however further work would need to be done regarding possible grid connection points before any approach could be made. Councillor Jabbar would be delighted to speak to Councillor Harkness outside the meeting.

RESOLVED that:

1. The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 16th December 2019, 27th January 2020, 24th February 2020 and 23rd March 2020 be noted.
2. The question and response provided be noted.

11d Questions on Joint Arrangements

To note the minutes of the following Joint Authority and Partnership meetings and the relevant spokesperson to respond to questions from Members.

The minutes of the following Joint Authorities and Partnerships meetings were submitted as follows:

Oldham Leadership Board	23 January 2020
Police and Crime Panel	14 November 2019
Commissioning Partnership Board	28 November 2019
	30 January 2020
MioCare Board	23 October 2019
Peak Park District Authority	1 November 2019
	6 December 2019
	14 February 2020
GM Health and Care Board	25 October 2019
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	29 November 2019
	7 January 2020
	31 January 2020
Greater Manchester Transport Committee	8 November 2019
	17 January 2020
	21 February 2020
Greater Manchester Waste and Recycling Committee	14 November 2019
	16 January 2020

RESOLVED that: The minutes of the Joint Authorities and Partnership meetings as detailed in the report be noted.

12 **NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS**

Black Lives Matter

Councillor Chadderton MOVED and Councillor Ur-Rehman SECONDED the following MOTION:

"This council notes with great sadness the murder of George Floyd in the United States and the hurt and anger made more visible as a consequence. Racism and racial inequality remain shameful aspects of our lives in Oldham as elsewhere and must be confronted.
In recent weeks Greater Manchester has seen Desmond Ziggy Mombeyarara tasered in front of his small child when stopped by police for a driving offence, and the collapse of a police misconduct trial after Greater Manchester Police declined to submit any evidence against the officer who shot Anthony Grainger through the chest as he sat in his car. A judge last year found GMP to be entirely to blame for Mr. Grainger's death.
This council notes that since 1991 there have been more than 1,500 deaths in police custody or following police contact in the UK, but not police officers have been found guilty of murder or manslaughter related to any of them. Meanwhile, as highlighted by the Lammy review, disproportionality in the criminal justice system remains significant. Looking at just one metric, black people were searched by GMP at nearly seven times the rate of white people using stop and search powers in 2018/19.
This Council resolves to:

- Produce a new Equalities Strategy, setting out how it will make the council a more equal organisation and make Oldham a fairer place in which to live, work and feel safe.
- Request the Chief Executive writes to the Mayor of Greater Manchester, reaffirming our support for the creation of a GM Race Equality Panel and for the publication of a quarterly Race Equality Policing Report.

Councillor C. Gloster spoke on the motion and raised a point of order with regard to the wording in the report.
Councillor Mushtaq spoke in support of the Motion.
Councillor Taylor spoke in support of the Motion.
Councillor Shah spoke in support of the Motion.
Councillor Al-Hamdani spoke in support of the Motion

Councillor Chadderton exercised her right of reply. In responding, Councillor Chadderton altered the wording of the motion.

Councillor C. Gloster made a personal statement.

The ALTERED MOTION:

"This council notes with great sadness the murder of George Floyd in the United States, and the hurt and anger made more

visible as a consequence. Racism and racial inequality remain shameful aspects of our lives in Oldham as elsewhere and must be confronted.

In recent weeks Greater Manchester has seen Desmond Ziggy Mombeyarara tasered in front of his small child when stopped by police for a driving offence, and the collapse of a police misconduct trial after Greater Manchester Police declined to submit any evidence against former Assistant Chief Constable Steven Heywood after Anthony Grainger was shot through the chest as he sat in a car. A judge last year found GMP to be entirely to blame for Mr Grainger's death.

This council notes that since 1991 there have been more than 1,500 deaths in police custody or following police contact in the UK, but no police officers have been found guilty of murder or manslaughter related to any of them. Meanwhile, as highlighted by the Lammy review, disproportionality in the criminal justice system remains significant. Looking at just one metric, black people were searched by GMP at nearly seven times the rate of white people using stop and search powers in 2018/19.

This council resolves to:

- Produce a new Equalities Strategy, setting out how it will make the council a more equal organisation and make Oldham a fairer place in which to live, work and feel safe
- Request that the Chief Executive writes to the Mayor of Greater Manchester, reaffirming our support for the creation of a GM Race Equality Panel and for the publication of a quarterly Race Equality Policing Report."

On being put to the vote, 51 votes were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION as AMENDED and 0 votes were cast AGAINST with 1 ABSTENTION. The MOTION as AMENDED was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED that:

1. A new Equalities Strategy be produced setting out how it will make the Council a more equal organisation and make Oldham a fairer place in which to live, work and feel safe.
2. The Chief Executive be requested to write to the Mayor of Greater Manchester, reaffirming our support for the creation of a GM Race Equality Panel and for the publication of a quarterly Race Equality Policing Report.

NOTE: Councillor Garry declared a pecuniary interest in this item. Councillor Garry left the meeting during the item and took no part in the discussion or vote thereon.

13 **NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS**

Motion 1 - Tax relief for Tram Travel

Councillor Harkness MOVED and Councillor Hamblett SECONDED the following motion:

This Council notes that:

- In his article for the Daily Telegraph 'Tax Relief just the Ticket' (6 October 2013), journalist Boris Johnson called for employees to be 'allowed to pay for their season tickets from their pre-tax income.'
- Mr Johnson advocated for the introduction of a new tax relief scheme, limited to the basic rate, whereby 'the employer would buy the season ticket and deduct the cost from his or her (employee's) pay packet – and only then would the employee be assessed for tax.'
- The impact of such a scheme would mean that employees would have less taxable income reducing their liability for income tax and national insurance and the employer would also save on national insurance contributions.
- An annual season ticket costs a Metrolink tram commuter from Shaw to Manchester £1,154, a Train commuter from Greenfield to Manchester £1,208, and a Bus commuter with First Manchester £670.
- Such a tax-relief scheme would represent a significant financial saving for our Borough's commuters.
- Council further notes that now Mr Johnson is Prime Minister he has it within his power to put his aspirations for tax relief on seasonal travel tickets into practice.

Council resolves to:

- Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor of The Exchequer to request that this Government introduces a tax relief scheme.
- This would be on seasonal travel tickets (following the principles outlined in Mr Johnson's Telegraph article in 2013) making this effective as soon as possible.
- Write to the Mayor of Greater Manchester saying that we all should support such a scheme."

Councillor Roberts MOVED and Councillor Fielding SECONDED that under Council Procedure Rule 8.4d) the motion be referred to Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Councillor Harkness did not exercise his right of reply.

On being put to the VOTE, that the MOTION be REFERRED to Overview and Scrutiny Board was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

RESOLVED under Council Procedure Rule 8.4d), the motion be referred to Overview and Scrutiny.

<u>Motion 2 – Accessible Shopping Districts</u>

The Chief Executive had been notified that Councillor Williamson was unable to attend the meeting and was unable to Move the Motion and notice had been given that Councillor

Murphy would Move the Motion in her absence which was AGREED.
Councillor Murphy MOVED and Councillor H. Gloster SECONDED the following MOTION:

"Council notes that:

- Regulations are in place so that future improvements are Disability Discrimination Act compliant.
- That there are low-cost improvements businesses can make.
- Charities and Oldham Council can support and provide better guidance as to what those improvements might be.
- There is proven success in directly investing in our town and district centres.
- That all members need to be aware of dementia awareness training available.
- Oldham Council know simple steps that can be taken to improve the use of the shops for people with dementia in our communities.
- The Coronavirus has pushed elderly people from our high streets. This motions aids those made vulnerable by Covid-19 to make an easier return to shopping.
- Improvements such as these would help and support the local economy.

Council resolves to:

- Set aside funding for adaptation to offer improved access for those with mobility issues. This could include, but not limited to: the provision of ramps, hand rails, additions to entrances, removal of steps. Any necessary alterations to make our district shopping centres become more accessible.
- Set up a district panel like that of the High Grants scheme. This is where local elected members have an input and approval of applications to ensure an accessible commercial centre with the Cabinet Member having the final say on applications.
- To ask Highways Engineers to carry out inspections for shopping area footways to ensure they meet current guidelines. It doesn't matter if this is in a town centre or a row of shops on an estate, accessible shopping must take place right across our Borough.
- Ask that an assessment of shopping area and town centre signage is clear and that brail information points are installed across these zones.
- Ask that Oldham Council partner with Age UK, Alzheimer's Society, Royal National Institute for Blind People (RNIB), Action on Hearing Loss and others to carry out assessment of buildings and shopping areas.
- Prepare a guidance campaign for businesses that could be used to raise accessibility awareness in commercial districts.
- Refer motion to Overview and Scrutiny and ask the mover and seconder to be part of any investigation.

- Read the report on Town Centres by Trailblazers, a group of disabled campaigners from across the UK titled 'Short-changed' to see if there is anything that we can learn from the report finding."

AMENDMENT

Councillor Roberts MOVED and Councillor Ball SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

"Delete bullet point 1 and insert:

- The Equality Act requires that businesses make reasonable adjustments to ensure their premises and services are accessible to people with disabilities.

Delete bullet point 2.
New bullet point 3 – delete 'better' and 'what those improvement might be'. Add at end 'low-cost improvements businesses can make.'
New bullet point 4 – add at end 'and Oldham Council has made bids for government funding e.g. the Future High Streets Fund as well as nominating Royton Town Centre for the GM Mayor's Town Centre Challenge.
New bullet point 5 – delete existing and insert

- 'The Work of the Oldham Dementia Partnership, Oldham Dementia Action Alliance and the Oldham Dementia Friends Champions network supports people with dementia and their families and makes businesses and services accessible to'

Delete original bullet point 6.
New bullet point 6: insert at beginning – 'High Streets and district centres were already facing commercial challenge before the pandemic'. Insert 'and vulnerable' after elderly. Insert: 'It is also likely to accelerate the transfer to on-line shopping and further reduce footfall overall' after 'our high streets'.
Insert new bullet point 7

- '£210,417 has been allocated to Oldham from the 'Reopening High Streets Safely' fund.

'Council resolves to:
Bullet point 1 – delete 'Set aside funding for adaptation to offer improved access for those with mobility issues.' Insert 'Ensure that any investment including from Creating a Better Place, in high streets, district centres and shopping areas take account of good practice in improving access for people with disabilities and dementia including improving signage, considering installing braille information points and assessing what can be learnt from the report 'Short Changed', a report on town centres by Trailblazers.'
Bullet point 2 – delete and insert 'Encourage Members to consider access improvements to shops and shopping as part of bids made to the next round of the Local Improvement Fund. Members can work with partners including. Add Age UK, Alzheimer's Society, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), Action on Hearing Loss and others to carry out assessment of buildings and shopping areas from original bullet point 5.

Delete all subsequent bullet point and insert new bullet point 3

- ‘Continue to promote and support the work of Oldham Dementia Partnership, Oldham Dementia Action Alliance and the Oldham Dementia Friends Champions network in supporting people with dementia and their families to be able to use public and commercial spaces safely.’

Amended Motion to read:

“Council notes that:

- The Equality Act requires that businesses make reasonable adjustments to ensure their premises and services are accessible to people with disabilities;
- Charities and Oldham Council can support and provide guidance as to low-cost improvements businesses can make.
- There is proven success in directly investing in our town and district centres and Oldham Council has made bids for government funding e.g. the Future High Streets Funds as well as nominating Royton Town Centre for the GM Mayor’s Town Centre Challenge.
- The work of the Oldham Dementia Partnership, Oldham Dementia Action Alliance and the Oldham Dementia Friends Champions network supports people with dementia and their families and makes businesses and services accessible to
- High streets and district centres were already facing commercial challenges before the pandemic. The Coronavirus has pushed elderly and vulnerable people from our high streets. It is also likely to accelerate the transfer to on-line shopping and further reduce footfall overall. This motion aids those made vulnerable by Covid-19 to make an easier return to shopping.
- £210,417 has been allocated to Oldham from the *Reopening High Streets Safely Fund.*

Council resolves to:

- Ensure that any investment, including from Creating a Better Place, in high streets, district centres and shopping areas takes account of good practice in improving access for people with disabilities and dementia including improving signage, considering installing braille information points and assessing what can be learnt from the report ‘Short changed’, a report on town centres by Trailblazers. This could include, but not limited to: the provision of ramps, hand rails, additions to entrances, removal of steps. Any necessary alterations needed to make our district shopping centres become more accessible.
- Encourage Members to consider access improvements to shops and shopping as part of bids to the next round of the Local Improvement Fund. Members can work with local partners including Age UK, Alzheimer’s Society, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), Action on Hearing Loss, and other to carry out assessment of buildings and shopping areas.

- Continue to promote and support the work of Oldham Dementia Partnership, Oldham Dementia Action Alliance and the Oldham Dementia Friends Champions Network in supporting people with dementia and their families to be able to use public and commercial spaces safely."

Councillor Murphy exercised his right of reply.
Councillor Roberts exercised her right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT.

On being put to the vote, 42 votes were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT and 9 votes were cast AGAINST with 0 ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore CARRIED.

Councillor Murphy exercised his right of reply.

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

RESOLVED that:

1. Any investment, including from Creating A Better Place, in high streets, district centres and shopping areas be ensured to take account of good practice in improving access for people with disabilities and dementia including improving signage, considering installing braille information points and assessing what can be learnt from the report 'Short changed', a report on town centres by Trailblazers. This could include, but not limited to: the provision of ramps, hand rails, additions to entrances, removal of steps. Any necessary alterations needed to make our district shopping centres become more accessible.
2. Members be encouraged to consider access improvements to shops and shopping as part of bids made to the next round of the Local Improvement Fund. Members can work with local partners including Age UK, Alzheimer's Society, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), Action on Hearing Loss and others to carry out assessment of buildings and shopping areas.
3. The work of the Oldham Dementia Partnership, Oldham Dementia Action Alliance and the Oldham Dementia Friends continued to be promoted and supported in supporting people with dementia and their families to be able to use public and commercial spaces safely.

<u>Motion 3- Chatty Checkouts and Cafes</u>

"Social isolation impacts on personal mental health and physical health. This also has a negative impact on the community. Councillors should be committed to looking at innovative ways of addressing this issue. This commitment must form part of Oldham Borough aspiring to be an Age-Friendly local authority.

Council notes that:

- In the UK the Chatty Café Scheme (https://thechattycafescheme.co.uk) has been established with 900 participating outlets so far offering opportunities for customers to converse at Chatter and Natter Tables. Costa Coffee has become the scheme's first national partner.
- The Pub in the Hub scheme is offering support to public houses joining the scheme.
- In the Netherlands Chatter Checkouts have been introduced in supermarkets, dedicated lanes where interaction between the customer and staff member is purposefully expected to take longer as conversation performs part of the transaction.
- Local authority run premises, such as libraries, leisure centres, and the local markets; health centres and hospitals run by the NHS; and pubs, cafes, shopping centres and retail parks run by business partners have potential to host such schemes.
- Operators of supermarkets and other retailers in the borough may wish to establish Chatter Checkouts, maybe at quieter times of the trading week.
- There will be many people suffering from mental ill-health from the isolation of lockdown measures following the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Council resolves to:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Chatty Café Scheme offering this Council's support after Coronavirus measures have been lifted.
- Ask the Overview and Scrutiny and Health Scrutiny Boards, in consultation with Age UK Oldham and District Teams, to:
  1. Examine the practicalities of introducing Chatter and Natter Tables in Council premises,
  2. Identify where they could be established;
  3. Identify how referrals to such provision might form part of social prescribing.
- Ask the Chief Executive to write to Town Centre Partnership Board and major supermarket chains in the Borough for their views and suggestions for establishing Chatter and Natter Tables and Chatter Checkouts.
- Ensure the Council's website has a link to the Chatty Café Scheme.
- Engage with local market stall holders and vendors asking them to participate."

AMENDMENT

Councillor Akhtar MOVED and Councillor Ibrahim SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

"Amend second bullet point in Council resolves to remove 'Overview and Scrutiny and the' and changes 'Boards' to 'Board'.

Amended motion to read:

"Social isolation impacts on personal mental health and physical health. This also has a negative impact on the community. Councillors should be committed to looking at innovative ways of addressing this issue. This commitment must form part of Oldham Borough aspiring to be an Age-Friendly local authority.

Council notes that:

- In the UK the Chatty Café Scheme (https://thechattycafescheme.co.uk) has been established with 900 participating outlets so far offering opportunities for customers to converse at Chatter and Natter Tables. Costa Coffee has become the scheme's first national partner.
- The Pub in the Hub scheme is offering support to public houses joining the scheme.
- In the Netherlands Chatter Checkouts have been introduced in supermarkets, dedicated lanes where interaction between the customer and staff member is purposefully expected to take longer as conversation performs part of the transaction.
- Local authority run premises, such as libraries, leisure centres, and the local markets; health centres and hospitals run by the NHS; and pubs, cafes, shopping centres and retail parks run by business partners have potential to host such schemes.
- Operators of supermarkets and other retailers in the borough may wish to establish Chatter Checkouts, maybe at quieter times of the trading week.
- There will be many people suffering from mental ill-health from the isolation of lockdown measures following the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Council resolves to:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Chatty Café Scheme offering this Council's support after Coronavirus measures have been lifted.
- Ask the Health Scrutiny Board, in consultation with Age UK Oldham and District Teams, to:
  1. Examine the practicalities of introducing Chatter and Natter Tables in Council premises,
  2. Identify where they could be established;
  3. Identify how referrals to such provision might form part of social prescribing.
- Ask the Chief Executive to write to Town Centre Partnership Board and major supermarket chains in the Borough for their views and suggestions for establishing Chatter and Natter Tables and Chatter Checkouts.
- Ensure the Council's website has a link to the Chatty Café Scheme.
- Engage with local market stall holders and vendors asking them to participate."

Councillor Murphy ACCEPTED the AMENDMENT.

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

RESOLVED that:

1. The Chief Executive be asked to write to the Chatty Café Scheme offering this Council's support after Coronavirus lockdown measures have lifted.
2. The Health and Scrutiny Board be asked, in consultation with Age UK Oldham and District Teams, to:
   i) Examine the practicalities of introducing Chatter and Natter Tables in Council premises.
   ii) Identify where they could be established.
   iii) Identify how referrals to such provision might form part of social prescribing.
3. The Chief Executive be asked to write to the Town Centre Partnership Board and major supermarket chains in the Borough for their views and suggestions for establishing Chatter and Natter Tables and Chatter Checkouts.
4. A link to the Chatty Café Scheme be ensured on the Council's website.
5. The local market stall holders and vendors be engaged to ask them to participate.

14 **OLDHAM'S COVID-19 RESPONSE**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Fielding SECONDED a report which outlined Oldham's partnership response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 31st December 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) was informed of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province China. On 12 January 2020, it was announced that a new novel coronavirus had been identified, causing the outbreak. This virus is referred to as SARS-CoV-2 and the associated disease as COVID-19. Since January, the virus has spread quickly across the globe, causing a global pandemic.

Manchester and Greater Manchester (GM) declared a major incident on Friday, 20 March 220. This activated the multi-agency response arrangements in line with the GM generic response plan and the pandemic flu plan. The Prime Minister's unprecedented announcement at 8.30 p.m. on Monday, 23 March 2020 set out the seriousness of the situation and the expectations of all residents, businesses and public services.

New emergency legislation was passed into law which supported local authorities in responding to the pandemic, whilst ensuring essential business and services continued. The legislation gave the Council a statutory duty to co-ordinate food, self-care, medical supplies and other forms of necessary assistance to vulnerable groups in response to COVID-19.

In line with other Greater Manchester authorities, Oldham established a major incident command structure which included a Gold, Silver and Bronze approach. This included a Political Gold of Council Leader/Deputy Leaders and the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group.

The report summarised the Oldham Partnership's response to COVID-19, highlighting the contribution form the Council's partners and communities in tackling the pandemic. As the response covered almost all service areas, the report highlighted six thematic areas:

1. Protecting our most vulnerable residents – including Community Bronze Group, emergency food distribution, volunteering, supporting wider need and the Helpline and Response System.
2. Health and Wellbeing – including Oldham CCG and Critical Care Services, Public Health Campaign, Mental Health Services, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Test and Trace, Care Homes and Bereavement Support
3. Keeping Services Going – including Community Safety and Cohesion, Domestic Abuse, Education, Libraries and Gallery Oldham, Parks and Greenspaces, Safeguarding, Waste and Recycling, Accommodation Review, Communications and Workforce.
4. Helping people back on their feet – including financial support to residents, food donations and fundraising, Housing and homelessness, support for carers and Welfare Rights.
5. Supporting businesses and Oldham's economy – including small business grants and retail, leisure and hospitality grants and Business Rate relief.
6. The transition from lockdown to recovery.

Question received from Councillor H. Gloster:
"How may Covid-19 Cases there have been by ward, and the death rate for each of those wards/"

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that the Council did not currently have the data on the number of COVID cases and deaths at ward level – this was a national policy. At the Local Authority level, as of 16th June 2020, there were 1,139 cases confirmed in Oldham, a rate 483.4 per 100,000 population.

Question received from Councillor Hamblett:
"In October 2016, national, regional and local government bodies participated in a three-day simulation. This was entitled Exercise Cygnus which tested preparedness arrangements for responding to pandemic influenza. Feedback and lessons learned were established via a formal process of feedback from all participants. The response they can confirm that the Oldham Council and Greater Manchester Resilience Forum did not take part in this exercise. Why was this not undertaken by this Council and by the Greater Manchester region and why did not implement the guidance it gave?"

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that the Council did not take part in the exercise and any further details could be gathered from Public Health England. Before COVID-19, Oldham Council had a pandemic flu plan in place which was based on guidance form central government. This was in line with other Greater Manchester plans. There were a wide range of emergency planning simulations that took part each year and the Council worked with the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum to determine which the Council took part in. The Council also worked across the system to implement any recommendations which arose from these simulations.

Question received from Councillor C. Gloster:
"How many places did the authority block book in Oldham care homes for recovering Covid-19 patients leaving hospital? Were many of the patients then re-tested for Covid-19 before they returned to the care homes, and how many Covid-19 related deaths have been reported from care home residents in Oldham?"

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that 24 placed had been booked, but not just for recovering Covid-19 patients, but to maintain flow out of hospital more generally. Hospital discharge guidance stated that all should be tested prior to discharge. Guidance sated all new residents should self-isolate in their rooms as the point of being admitted. As of 12th June 2020, of which 81 had died in the care homes and 25 had died in hospital.

Question received from Councillor Al-Hamdani:
"In two parts, please could the Council be informed as to what has been the impact of Covid-19 on the lives of the residents occupying Council-owned, Public Finance Initiative-2 and Public Finance Initiative-4 social housing? And what specific support has been provided to these residents, particularly the elderly, vulnerable and disabled, by the housing management providers, Housing 21 and Great Places, during this current crises?"

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that essential services, including urgent repairs, fire safety checks, gas servicing, cleaning on communal areas, etc., all continued to be delivered. Services were unable to access properties where the household had been self-isolating. Certain other softer services, such as social activities, residents' meetings, coffee mornings, etc., had been curtained in line with government guidance. Prioritisation of any general needs re-lets had been given to provide permanent accommodation for those occupying temporary accommodation. Sor far three families had been permanently re-housed to date. The re-letting of bungalows and sheltered flats was being managed with great care and with full risk-assessments undertaken. The re-letting of Extra Care flats had been temporarily put on hold. Twenty-thousand pounds

had been donated through PFI partners to the Action Together Covid-19 relief fund to support the community hubs. All residents had been contacted by the Council's PFI providers to ensure they had all the support they needed. This included ensuring residents had food and essential items delivered either by Age UK or Action Together and also sign-posted to support networks as required. Those affected by loss of employment and income had been sign-posted and supported by Housing 21 and Great Places to apply for the benefited to which they were entitled. For residents in sheltered schemes, creative ways of avoiding social isolation were in place such as 'door step corridor bingo'. Both Inspiral Oldham (Great Places and Wates) and Housing 21 had been exemplary during the pandemic crises and had worked well in partnership with the Council's PFI Housing Contract team.

Councillor Goodwin spoke on the report ad asked a question related to grants.

Councillor Sykes made an observation on the report and thanked staff as well as thanked doctors and nurses in the NHS in dealing with COVID-19.

Councillor Hobin thanked all the volunteers on the hotline and asked a question about the figures in the report. Councillor Shah responded that the Council had captured the information as best it could.

Councillor Mushtaq spoke on the report.

Councillor Jabbar spoke on the report in response to Councillor Goodwin's question.

Councillor Shah exercised her right of reply.

RESOLVED that:

1. Oldham's Partnership Response to the COVID-19 pandemic be noted.
2. The questions and responses provided be noted.
3. The observation be noted.

NOTED: Councillor Ahmad left the meeting during this item.

15 **UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal Services which informed members of actions that had been taken following previous Council meetings and provided feedback on issues raised at those meetings.

Councillor H. Gloster asked the following question:

"As per the Liberal Democrat motion on Dog Fouling in 2019, what is the progress with this Fixed Penalty Notice? Are those involved going to do anything at all? It's been almost a year."

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture responded that work on progressing the motion via the Overview and Scrutiny Board had been delayed. A councillor had been nominated form the Board to work with officers to progress the points raised and this work would now be prioritised. As background to the work in this area, the Council had received 40 complaints of dog fouling since 1st April 2020 and issued 13 fixed penalty notices. The fine level was not set at £100 per offence, reduced to £70 if paid within 10 days.

RESOLVED that:

1. The actions taken regarding motions and actions from previous Council meetings be agreed and correspondence and updates received be noted.
2. That the question and response provided be noted.

16 **CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - FEEDBACK REPORT**

Councillor Fielding MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED a report which highlighted the findings of the LGA Peer Challenge carried out in Oldham between 21 – 24 January 2020.

The Council had undertaken a voluntary Corporate Peer Challenge between 21 – 24 January 2020, which was facilitated by the Local Government Association and undertaken by Senior Elected Members and Chief Officers across Local Government. The Challenge Team spent four days in Oldham and during this time spoke with a large number of Councillors, staff, partners and community groups which focused on the areas above.

The feedback report was attached as an appendix and highlighted that the organisation had a clear vision and energy for the borough, our ambition and future direction of travel, our relentless focus to improving outcomes for our residents and the strong partnership ethos that is in place across the borough. The report praised our 'bold, brave and honest' approach to Public Service
reform, as well as highlighting that our 'Team Oldham' approach is not only real, but that everyone within Oldham had 'commitment, passion and ambition for our organisation and place' and that we prided ourselves on working closely with Communities as a 'Council of Oldham, not in Oldham'.

The report identified that the scale of Oldham's ambition was a strength, although this also presented a challenge. The challenge team recommended a number of key points to be considered which would be addressed in the Council's resultant action plan.

Councillor Shah spoke on the report.
Councillor C. Gloster spoke on the report.
Councillor Fielding exercised his right of reply.

RESOLVED that:

1. The contents of the report and the feedback report received, as attached as an appendix to the report, be noted;
2. It be noted that a report would be presented to the Cabinet over the coming months, which would set out the Organisation's action plan against each of the key recommendations as set out within this paper.

17 **POLITICAL BALANCE REVIEW - COMPOSITION OF POLITICAL GROUPS - OUTSTANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS AND OUTSIDE BODIES APPOINTMENTS**

Councillor Fielding MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED a report of the Director of Legal Services which sought a review of the political composition of committees and the composition of political groups as previously notified under Regulations 8(1) of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and under Section 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 due to the reduction in Council membership from 60 to 58. The report sought agreement to the outstanding appointments of members to serve on the several Committee as detailed in the Constitution and listed at Appendix 1 to the report and the outstanding appointments to Outside Bodies as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

RESOLVED that:

1. The composition of the political groups as shown at paragraph 1.1 of the report be noted.
2 The several Committees detailed at paragraph 1.5 of the report be constituted with the Terms of Reference and delegated powers as detailed in the Constitutional Amendments Report.
3. The number of seats on the various Committees for the 2020/21 Municipal Year as detailed at paragraph 1.6 of the report be approved.
4. The allocation of seats to the political groups be confirmed and appointments made to fill the seats in accordance with Sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 199 as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report.
5. Any outstanding Chair and Vice-Chairs of each of the various Committees for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year be appointed as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report with the exception of the Selection and Appeals Committees and the District Lead for each of the District Areas be reaffirmed
6. The outstanding appointments to Outside Bodies as detailed at Appendix 2 of the report be agreed.
7. The Standards Committee remained outside of political balance as in previous years be confirmed to ensure appropriate representation.
8. The Traffic Regulation Order Panel remains outside political balance be confirmed.

9. Any outstanding appointments be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Main Opposition Group.

18 **CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**

Consideration was given to a report which sought approval for amendments to the Council's Constitution.

A refresh of the Council's Constitution had been undertaken with two principal objectives. The first was to ensure that all legislative and procedural references were current and up to date, including cross referencing to detailed procedures from more descriptive content and, secondly, looked to simplify, so far as possible, what would always be a complex procedural document to aid both understanding and application to practical circumstances.

The Constitution had been impacted upon by the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 which had introduced certain mandatory provisions for the period to 7th May 2021. Whilst these mandatory provisions were time limited, it was considered good practice for them to be incorporated into the Council's Constitution at this time to properly present the Council's statutory and procedural requirements under the Regulations.

The Planning Scheme of Delegation should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it was up to date and reflected current practices and policies. Planning Committee procedures had been under scrutiny recently due to a number of issues and it was timely to review practices and procedures. The current system would benefit from updating, simplification and revision to delegated powers and protocols.

At the Cabinet meeting, held on 27th January 2020, a suite of reports and recommendations related to 'Creating a Better Place' as the comprehensive vision and strategic framework for the Borough were approved. These included proposed amendments to the Executive arrangements, which included delegation arrangements, contained within the Land and Property Protocol which was included at Part 5(e) of the Council's Constitution. The approval of the Full Council was therefore required to agree the revision of the Council's Constitution.

Amendment 1:
Councillor C. Gloster MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:
"Part 5(e) - Land and Property Protocol
2. Corporate Property Board
Insert after the third bullet point:

- "The Opposition Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services"

Councillor Fielding exercised his right of reply.
Councillor C. Gloster exercised his right of reply.

On being put to the vote, 9 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT and 41 votes were cast AGAINST with1 abstention. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

Amendment 2:
Councillor Sykes MOVED and Councillor C. Gloster SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:
"Appendix A – Public Space Assessment Matrix
Table 1 Questions
Insert after 3 and renumber
4 – the land is formally laid out and maintained as a garden or landscaped area by Parish Councils or their agents.
5 – the land is formally laid out and maintained as a garden and landscaped area by Friends and Residents groups in line with the co-operative objectives of the Council.
6 – the land is formally laid out and maintained as a garden or landscaped area by any other organisation, charity, body or individual.
4 will then become 7, 5 will become 8."

Councillor Fielding did not exercise his right of reply.
Councillor Sykes did not exercise his right of reply.

On being put to the vote, 10 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT and 41 votes were cast AGAINST with no abstentions. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

Amendment 3:
Councillor C. Gloster MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:
Part 8 APPENDICES
Appendix 3 PROTOCOLS
REFERRAL PROCEDURE FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS
Numbered list 4
"Insert 'main opposition spokesperson' as a consultee in the decision-making process to confirm or reject the 'referral' based on the significance of the development and validity of the planning reasons.
New paragraph to read:
4. The Head of Planning and Development Management will in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair of the Planning Committee and the main opposition spokesperson, confirm or reject the 'referral' based on the significance of the development and validity of the planning reasons. Members who request a call-in will only be notified if their request has been rejected."

Councillor Roberts spoke on the amendment
Councillor H. Gloster spoke on the amendment.
Councillor Harkness spoke on the amendment.

Councillor Fielding exercised his right of reply.
Councillor C. Gloster exercised his right of reply.

On being put to the vote, 10 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT and 40 votes were cast AGAINST with 1 abstention. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

RESOLVED that:

1. The suggested amendments to Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions), Part 4E (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules) and Part 4H (Employment Procedure Rules) as detailed at Appendices 1, 4 and 5 to this report as part of the refresh of the Council's Constitution and the review of Planning Committee and Delegations, subject to the date of the implementation of the revised Overview and Scrutiny Committee arrangements being agreed at a future meeting of the Council be agreed.
2. The suggested amendments to Part 4A (Council Procedure Rules) and Part 4B (Access to Information Procedure Rules) as detailed at Appendices 2 and 3 to this report in compliance with the statutory provisions of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and to ensure alignment with the agreed amendments to Parts 3, 4E and 4H of the Council's Constitution be agreed.
3. The inclusion of the suggested amendments to Part 5(e) (Land and Property Protocols) into the Council's Constitution as detailed at Appendix 6 to the report be agreed.
4. The suggested amendments to Part 8 (Appendices) Appendix 3 (Protocols) as detailed at Appendix 7 to the report in respect of procedures related to the consideration of planning applications as part of the review of Planning Committee and related procedures be agreed.
5. Any further consequential amendments arising from the amendments to the Council's Constitution as presented in the report be delegated to the Director of Legal Services.

19 **MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal Services which set out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel. The Panel had given consideration to information from the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group, and representations from members on their roles and responsibilities, time required on casework and work required on undertaking committee work.

The Panel gave had also given consideration to Members Allowance Schemes across Greater Manchester as well as those of Kirklees and Calderdale Councils.

The Panel had made the recommendation that the members allowances for 2020/21 remain the same as in 2019/20 but with increases linked to the officer pay increase which had not yet been agreed. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the proposed scheme based on the Independent Remuneration Panel

recommendation, but this did not include the proposed increase referred to in Section 1.4 in the report as this had not yet been agreed. It was also proposed that the exception to the one SRA rule could also apply to a discretionary SRA payment.

RESOLVED that;

1. The recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel be noted.
2. The Members Allowances Scheme for 2020/21 as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
3. The exception to the one SRA rule to be applied to a discretionary SRA payment be approved.

20 **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON - INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal Services regarding the appointment of an independent person to be made to the Standards Committee and not to the Independent Remuneration Panel as referenced in the report.

Following the advertisement of the position, an interview had been conducted and it was recommended that Karen Williams be appointed as an Independent Person for the Standards Committee, to serve for a four-year term.

RESOLVED that Karen Williams be appointed as an Independent Person to the Standards Committee for a four-year term.

21 **COUNCIL MEETINGS AND MUNICIPAL CALENDAR 2020/21**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal Services which set out the meeting Calendar of Meetings for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED that:

1. The meetings of the Council to be held on the following dates in the 2020/2021 Municipal Year, commencing at 6.00 p.m. unless otherwise shown be approved:

   15 July 2020
   9 September 2020
   4 November 2020
   16 December 2020
   24 February 2021 (Budget)
   24 March 2021
   19 May 2021 (Annual at 12.00 noon)

2. The Council's Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2020/21 be approved.
3. Approval of any outstanding dates or changes to dates be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 10.08 pm