

**Present:** The Deputy Mayor in the Chair – Councillor Harrison

Councillors 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 (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Hewitt, Hobin, Hulme, A Hussain, F Hussain, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Jabbar, Jacques, Leach, Malik, McLaren, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Phythian, Price, Roberts, Salamat, Shah, Sheldon, Shuttleworth, Stretton, Surjan, Sykes, Taylor, Toor, Williamson and Williams

**1                    CIVIC APPRECIATION AWARD - MYRA WYERS**

Council were informed that a presentation had taken place for Mrs. Myra Wyers in recognition of her significant voluntary contribution and dedication to the local community and borough of Oldham.

Councillors Fielding, Sykes and Byrne gave congratulatory speeches about Mrs. Wyers.

**2                    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 15.5 and proposed that timings would include the extensions, therefore any members wishing to speak would be granted 4 minutes and 30 seconds and those members with a right of reply 6 minutes and 30 seconds. On being put to the vote, this was AGREED.

Apologies were received from Councillor Ahmad, Councillor Alexander, Councillor Hudson and Councillor Ur-Rehman.

**3                    ATTENDANCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Councillor Garry declared a pecuniary interest at Item 9d by virtue of her husband's employment with Greater Manchester Police.

Councillor Chris Gloster declared a personal interest at Item 9d by virtue of his receipt of an occupational pension from Greater Manchester Police.

Councillor Hazel Gloster declared a personal interest at Item 9d by virtue of her husband's receipt of an occupational pension from Greater Manchester Pension Fund.

Councillor Jabbar declared a personal interest at Item 10 in the motion *Fair Grade for All 2021*.



4 **TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 4TH NOVEMBER 2020 AND 25TH NOVEMBER 2020 BE SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be approved 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 Council was informed of the death of the former Mayoress of Oldham, Di Heffernan, the wife of the late Councillor Derek Heffernan.

Councillor Sykes spoke in tribute to Mrs Heffernan.

The Council received a letter from the Right Honourable Baroness Beverley Hughes, Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester, in response to the resolution of Full Council on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020 in relation to the independent CSE Assurance Review.

The Council noted the inspirational achievements of Kevin Sinfield MBE, who was born in Oldham. Along with his outstanding career in rugby, he had run seven marathons in seven days aiming to raise £77,777 in funds for ex-Leeds teammate Rob Burrow, who was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease and the MND Association. By the time he finished his seventh marathon on 7 December, more than £1.2 million had been raised and the total raised surpassed £2.5 million.

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

There were no petitions received to be noted.

8 **YOUTH COUNCIL**

There were no items submitted by the Youth Council.

9 **QUESTIONS TIME**

a Public Questions

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 agreed to suspend Council Procedure Rule 10.4 so that the questions would be shared on the screen rather than be read out.



The following questions were submitted:

1. Question received from Robert Barnes via email: **Oldham Council**  
Would the Council Leader please advise how much Oldham Council received in grant funding from Central Government for the financial year to date?  
Would he please break down where this grant funding has been spent?

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Green, responded that the Council had received £551m in revenue grants for the financial year to date. The net revenue budget of the Council was supported by £74.9m of Central Government Unringfenced Grant. Although unringfenced, it was made up of several different grants. Where the Government allocated funding with an intention that it was spent, rather than a direction, the Council allocated resources to service accordingly. This applied to funding such as the Improved Better Care Fund (£10.585m). The budget of the Council was also underpinned by £343.4m of ringfenced grant which must be used for the purpose it was given. The largest of these was £262.1m for the Dedicated Schools Grant. Since the start of the financial year, the Council had received a range of other revenue grants. There had been £2.759m of unringfenced grant of which the largest was £1.580m for the Opportunity Area. These grants had been allocated in line with the Government's intention. A range of grants had been received to support the response to COVID :

- £22.696m in unringfenced grant to support its general COVID spending
- £1.282m to support lost sales fees and charges income
- £25.463m to compensate the Council for the business rate reliefs given to retail, hospitality, leisure and nursery businesses
- £54.7m to support mandatory and discretionary business grants introduced at the first national lockdown
- £10.611m for business grants introduced for the tiered restrictions and second national lockdown – all such grants were being paid to eligible businesses
- A total of £0.211m had been received in new burdens funding to manage the grant regimes
- A total of £15m had been received for COVID-specific grants and all were being used in line with Government grant terms and conditions. These included £4.592m for the Infection Control grant.

The Council had also received £14.4m of additional capital grants. All were being used for the purpose intended.

2. Question received from Beth Sharp via email:  
There are currently 11 vacant and derelict plots in Derker.

These plots are overgrown with weeds, they are used for fly tipping, and the knee rails are rotting and have been vandalised. The appearance of these sites sends the message that this is a forgotten area in the town and this is all Derker is worth.

Will the relevant Cabinet member meet with me in Derker and see first-hand the blight caused by the Council's neglect and will they, without delay, arrange for these weeds to be removed and a maintenance plan put in place to ensure residents do not have to live with this neglect for the next 10 years as they have done the previous 10?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture responded that, since the termination of the Housing Market Renewal Project the Council had worked with partners and delivered 226 new homes in Derker at Churchill Gardens and on two developments on Acre Lane. Afghan Park had also been modernised and extended onto London Road.

Officers were working on proposals to deliver wheelchair accessible houses and bungalows that would be owned by the Council on one of the remaining sites.

A bid had also been submitted to the Brownfield Housing Fund, which, if successful, would provide grant funding to help deliver high quality, energy efficient homes in the area. The outcome of this bid to GMCA was expected early in the new year.

The area had benefited from some improvement work during the lockdown periods this year, as Acre Lane and London Road were both re-surfaced. Reports of littering and dumping would be investigated and the sites cleared as part of the scheduled work undertaken in the area

3. Question from Michael Newell via email:

With the Spatial Framework development plan developed by Andy Burnham being delayed. What are Oldham councils plans for the future of much needed new houses in the town.

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Housing, responded that the Council remained committed to building homes in the Town Centre and was actively looking for funding opportunities and investors to take forward the Town Centre Masterplan to achieve this. The Council's Flexible Housing Fund, set up as part of Creating a Better Place, was being used to implement the Council's Housing Strategy. One project under development was a small sites programme to build new adapted and wheelchair accessible homes including a site in Derker referred to by Cllr Brownridge in the previous answer. The Council was also looking forward to the completion of new Council owned homes on Primrose Bank which were on schedule to be handed over early in 2021. At the same time, the Council was currently considering the options and potential implications for progressing the Local Plan and how best to take this forward given the GMSF had failed.

4. Question from Connor Green via email:  
Another consultation on bus franchising has launched this month. What is the reason for a further consultation if the results of the first one was fairly conclusive.

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture responded that, following the introduction of the Bus Services Act (2017), a proposed bus franchising scheme was prepared for Greater Manchester and the public were consulted on this scheme by GMCA. The consultation closed in January this year. The vast majority of respondents to the consultation supported GMCA's proposals for a franchising scheme (83% of the 5,978 participants). However, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on Greater Manchester's bus market, including timetables, revenues, passenger numbers and the public's attitudes to public transport. Due to this, further work was needed to assess the impact of coronavirus on the bus reform process before any decisions on bus franchising could be made.

5. Question from Dave Arnott via email:  
Following the Council Leader's disclosure of the £9.5m cost of purchasing the Spindles, would he please answer the following questions - in addition to the £9.5m, how much was paid in fees and stamp duty?

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, responded that final costs for fees and Stamp Duty Land Tax were still being finalised due to transition arrangements still taking place following the formal contract exchange for the acquisition. It was estimated to be in the region of £700k.

6. Question from Laura Rogers via email:  
I am asking this question as a resident of Oldham and a member of Rainy City Roller Derby, Oldham's women's roller derby league - in fact, I moved to Oldham (and now live and work here) to join Rainy. As a result of the upcoming regeneration of Oldham town centre, the building which had been Rainy's training and game venue is being demolished. While the news of investment in Oldham is exciting and deserving, we have had to vacate our premises with very little notice (as we were expecting to sign a new lease).  
Rainy City has been located in Oldham (at the Thunderdome, 51 - 53 King Street) for nearly ten years. Prior to Covid, we had four competing teams, a junior division, new skater training and hired our space to the Oldham men's roller derby team. Our A team is the top ranked team in Europe and #10 in the world. People moved to the area from across Europe and commuted long distances to train with Rainy. We attracted audiences to



Oldham from across the UK and welcomed teams here from around the world.

The Council has publicly pledged support for Rainy in looking for a new venue. In terms of finding that new venue, can you clarify what support we can expect now and in the near future? Can we count on this support going forwards?

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, responded that the questions was in relation to the support the Council could offer to help them find a new home.

The Council recognised the importance of the Rainy City Roller Derby team, locally, nationally and internationally and was keen to support them to find an alternative venue.

With regards to the purchase of the building, council officers had been in discussion with the owners of the Riley's building regarding a potential purchase for number of months and on 25th November an in-principle agreement was reached for a purchase of the building.

Without agreement from the Council and with no prior warning, the owners then contacted the Roller Derby tenants to inform them the Council was purchasing the building and that their lease was being terminated.

This did not give officers sufficient time to enter into a dialogue with the Roller Derby and work up a support package /relocation.

As soon as he personally was made aware of the situation, he had instructed the Business Growth and Investment team to make contact and help find alternative premises. The Investment team had now spoken to the Rainy City Roller team and were offering support, this had included an extensive search of properties via the Council database, discussions with agents and furthermore a request had been sent out to businesses in the area to try and find a suitable venue. The Council was keen to resolve this issue as soon as possible and would continue to support the team for as long as required.

7. Question from Michael Newell via email;

The latest version of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework was set to protect the green belt in Woodhouses by keeping its protected designation. Now the plan has been withdrawn what is the status of the Woodhouses greenbelt.

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Housing, responded that the status of Woodhouses Green Belt remained designated in line with the national planning policy framework and Oldham's Local Plan (Policy 22 on Protecting Open Land). It remained protected. The GMCA and Leaders were currently considering how best to proceed in light of the recent decision by Stockport which led to the fall of the GMSF.

8. Question from Dave Arnott via email:

How much is the total budget for refurbishment of the



Spindles? Where is this money coming from?



Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, responded that the Council was considering a range of different options for the Spindles and the cost would depend on what the Council wanted to move into there and how ambitious it wished to be. It would also depend on whether any tenants wished to vacate the building. Plans had already been announced to develop office space, including space for Council staff, and Tommyfield Market. The refurbishment works would be taken from the Council's Creating a Better Place Programme. As the Spindles had been acquired at a lower price than anticipated, there was more than sufficient provision within the capital funds allocated.

9. Question from Dave Arnott via email:  
Will the Council give financial assistance to market traders in order to facilitate any potential future move? For example, cutting business rates?

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, responded that the Council's ambition was to move Tommyfield Market into the Spindles. The Council was in talks with the Market Trader Association. Councillor Fielding had met with them personally and many of the traders had indicated that a move into the Spindles would make the market more sustainable. The Council was talking directly to the traders affected to ascertain what support they will need for the move.

10. Question from Dave Arnott via email:  
Will the Council consider cutting the current rents the market traders pay to assist them at this difficult time?

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, responded that market traders have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief since April 2005, which means that they don't pay business rates. There had not been a rent increase since 2010. There were a number of rent discount schemes for traders, which were based on individual business set-ups. All traders were currently eligible for between a 10% and an 80% discount on their rent. The Council also assisted traders with free Wi-Fi, discounted storage space, subsidised utility costs, and subsidised parking. The Council was currently running a marketing campaign, encouraging people to shop local and support the traders. During the current difficult times, the Council is also helping traders with payment plans for their rent.

11. Question from Dave Arnott via email:  
Would the Council Leader please provide the footfall figures

for the past 12 months for the town centre?



Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, responded that the Council did not hold footfall figures for the town centre as a whole, as gathering this information would require very expensive equipment. Footfall in Spindles for the 12 months up to December was 5.7 million people.

At this point in the meeting the Mayor advised that all of the submitted questions had received a response.

**RESOLVED** that the questions and responses provided be noted.

b Questions to Leader and Cabinet

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

Question 1: Beer but in fact the chips are down

“My first question concerns the immediate future of the hospitality industry in this Borough.

The hospitality sector has come in for some particularly harsh treatment from this Government since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, despite the fact that it is estimated that only 3 – 5% of new infections originate from contacts in the hospitality industry in its broadest sense.

It has so far endured two national complete lockdowns. Invested countless millions of pounds in retraining and providing PPE to staff, adapting physical structures and changing working practices to be Covid-safe.

Faced counter-productive government requirements, such as closing at 10pm, or only serve alcohol with a ‘substantial meal’, meaning that small, wet-led pubs cannot operate profitably or indeed operate at all. They are now closed in our Tier-3 Borough for an indefinite period with no clear end in sight.

In theory this closure could be for ‘wet’ led pubs until at least March 2021, as we must be in Tier-1 before they can legally reopen.

The reality is brewery, pub and restaurant operators are now at the end of their tether.

They have invested so much emotionally and financially, but the current ongoing uncertainty is taking its toll and frankly current Government financial support packages do not cut the mustard.


The one glimmer of immediate hope in this latest lockdown was a concession granted at the last-minute by the Government after intense pressure from industry bosses and CAMRA.

This was to permit alcohol, as well as food, to be sold by breweries, pubs and restaurants, if pre-ordered. This has been described as a lifeline, saving at least 70 million pints of beer being immediately poured down the drain!

My question relates to how we as a Council might promote this offer to enable our local hospitality industry to survive?

I welcome the recent launch of the Council’s Virtual Market Place where our small independent traders can advertise in these difficult





times, but at least these businesses can physically open. CAMRA has a national website Brew2You on which breweries and pubs can advertise their wares for discerning customers enabling them to make online purchases for collection or delivery. Would the Leader be willing to work with CAMRA and our local hospitality industry to create a similar website for Oldham which can be promoted alongside, or as part of the, the Virtual Market Place by Oldham Council, and help more of our local breweries, pubs and restaurants survive through these troubled times?”

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that Councillor Sykes had his support in lobbying over this issue. The restrictions had been in place for Greater Manchester for arguably far longer than other parts of the country and that was part of the reason why the Mayor of Greater Manchester had lobbied in October for a generous bail-out package when the area was placed into Tier 3, as the area had been affected for much longer than others. The Council would always work to support small businesses, including all those in the hospitality sector, and the suggestion of a local adaptation of Brew2You would be considered to enable local businesses to trade and provide salaries for their staff.

Question 2: Replacing Shaw and Crompton Health Centre

“For my second question, I would like to turn to another institution that is in dire straits.

I am referring to the Shaw and Crompton Health Centre which has been in desperate need of replacement for many years.

The latest housing development proposals for Shaw and Crompton will put yet more pressure on this outdated facility.

At present, we have a planning approval for 250 new homes at Cowlshaw, a new proposal for over 50 new homes on open land near Denbigh Drive, and a public consultation has just been concluded prior to an application for 400 new homes at the former Very and Yodel warehouse site.

If in the future a new ‘GMSF for the nine’ is to be brought back to Council, we would also see a further 482 homes in the Beal Valley and the number in the Cowlshaw area would double.

To summarise, this amounts to around 1,500 new properties – all of which are family homes and the residents and children of these new properties would all be looking to Shaw and Crompton Health Centre to provide for their immediate health needs.

Even before COVID-19, it often took days, sometimes weeks, for Shaw and Crompton residents to get a routine appointment – imagine how much harder it will be to do so with many thousands of more people making demands of an over-burdened service.

Therefore, in the recent public consultation for building on the Very and Yodel site the largest number of responses concerned the additional demands that would be placed on our local health service.

In early 2016, £500,000 was made available for a feasibility study into the options to build a new health centre, but almost five years on nothing has changed for the better; there is only now the prospect of greater and greater demands on the service.

My second question to the Leader tonight is then when will we

finally see a new purpose-built, modern health centre provided for the people of Shaw and Crompton?



Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that the question highlighted an important issue of new homes in the Borough. The Council needed to have a comprehensive conversation about the kind of place Oldham wanted to be, about how to provide homes people wanted to live in and the infrastructure those homes. It was sad that the GMSF had become a conversation solely about site selection, although the GMSF was no more. Discussion about infrastructure such as doctor's surgeries would have been welcomed and would need to take place in future as plans for more homes were drawn up. Creating a Better Place included investment in a new health centre in Shaw but, due to the current financial situation, the Council had needed to reassess each project in particular with regard to ongoing revenue consequences to the Council. In the light of this, the Council was unable to imminently build a new health centre in Shaw. The concerns of Ward Councillors across the Borough were understood and, if bids for funding were successful, projects further down the list in the Capital Programme could be considered. There was still a commitment to the new health centre in Shaw.

Councillor Sheldon, Acting Leader of the Conservative Group asked a question about coronavirus and the effects on businesses prior to a vaccine being available. How much had the Council received from the government for the second lockdown to support business grants, how much was still left to be allocated and was there an assurance that the Council would do all it could to ensure businesses that needed the grant would get that support? Also, how many fraudulent claims had been potentially made?

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that the news of a vaccine being rolled out was very welcomed. The Council had received money from the government to support local businesses, however there were currently seven different grant schemes running at the same time and it was very complicated for staff to administer, although they were doing so incredibly well. The actual amount would be confirmed to Councillor Sheldon later, but the uptake of grant had been fairly low compared to the amount paid in the first lockdown. Councillors were encouraged to ensure businesses were aware of the range of support on offer and ensure they claimed it.

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

1. Councillor Jacques asked the following question:  
Daisy Nook Country Park is loved by residents of Failsworth and beyond. Sadly the area around the park is often blighted by fly tipping. Members of a local Facebook group have suggested that they would be willing to crowd fund the purchase of CCTV cameras to

help combat the fly tipping. Could the appropriate cabinet member advise if this would help in the Council's fight against dumping in the area?



Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture, responded that she shared the concerns regarding flytipping in the park and welcomed any positive suggestions such as this . Unfortunately, after raising your suggestion with officers the Council was unable to install CCTV cameras in the Country park as they needed to be installed with power and to comply with the GDPR regulations that controlled the data that was collected. The Council looked at installing deployable CCTV cameras where it could across the Borough in response to issues but these could only be installed where there was a power connection and a pole to take the weight of the camera. Members of the public were asked to continue to report any incidents via the online reporting system and officers would investigate and arrange the necessary removal. They were also asked not to fly-tip.

2. Councillor Phythian asked the following question:  
It was good news to hear that Thornham Old Road had been removed from the site allocations in the GMSF. Now that the GMSF is dead, following Stockport's withdrawal, can the Leader confirm that Thornham Old Road will continue to be protected in the new arrangements being developed?

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, responded that had the GMSF gone out to consultation, Thornham Old Road would not have been included as a greenbelt site to be released for housing. Thornham Old Road was protected greenbelt under current planning policy. It had always been our intention to protect as much greenbelt as possible, and prioritise brownfield sites for housing and employment development. The Council was currently exploring the options available to Oldham following recent decisions about the future of GMSF and following announcements from the government this morning about the new Local Housing Need formulas, it was seeking further clarity on the options available to reduce greenbelt requirements. It was the intention not to put back in any greenbelt sites that had been taken out of the GMSF and, if possible, to reduce the number of sites further.

3. Councillor Ali asked the following question:  
The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 predicts that there will be a 13% increase in winter rainfall by 2040 due to global warming. It has become clear in recent days that many gullies and drains in the Borough struggle to cope with current levels of rainfall. What can the Council do to ensure that our drains in the Borough

have the capacity to cope with the demand placed on them by increased rainfall so that we can reduce the risk of flooding in Oldham in future?



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Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture, responded that there was nothing to suggest that any recent rainfall has caused any widespread problems with gullies struggling to cope. Ahead of severe weather warnings regarding rain we have a targeted approach to mechanically sweep channels and clean gullies in known hotspots which proved effective once again over last weekend. An analysis of previous flood events since 2016 showed that the root cause of known flooding attributed specifically to gullies was 5% or less in all cases, with river flooding and main sewer capacity being the two main causes.

4. Councillor Harkness asked the following question:

I have been petitioning for a new health for Saddleworth for many years to both this council and the clinical commissioning group and on a number of occasions both have said they will look at this.

I raised it in 2018 with the rearrangement proposals of primary health care where clusters would be formed. Our budget amendment found some finances to make a new health centre in Saddleworth a possibility. Whilst the administration rejected the proposal, they did say they would look at this. A new site was problematic, and I have always advocated the existing Saddleworth School site as a suitable location. and this should never have been considered for any land swap. Now that there has been a fortunate failure to reach agreement on a land swap this provides a real opportunity to build a new health centre for Saddleworth. Will the Cabinet Member commit to making this a reality?

Councillor Chauhan, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, responded that he wanted to thank the elected member for raising this matter tonight. Councillor Harkness would be more than aware that the NHS had recently unveiled a document talking about the future of integrated working. That would have implications locally and the Council needed to work within the parameters of that national framework. It was not a Council duty at the moment to provide health centres but was an NHS one. However, given the joint working locally with the NHS I have asked senior officers to provide me with a framework for undertaking a needs assessment in the area during 2021. I will keep the Member informed of progress.

Thanks was expressed to all the health and social care workers who had worked very hard to achieve the roll-out of the vaccine, and to the residents who had responded well and attended for vaccination.



5. Councillor Goodwin asked the following question:  
In an effort to discourage the use of vehicles that contribute to the type of air pollution which is damaging to health, it has been proposed to introduce a clean air zone in Greater Manchester. It was recently reported that a shift to cleaner vehicles in Leeds more quickly than was anticipated means that a similar proposal there is now no longer considered necessary. Is there any hope that a transition to cleaner vehicles in Greater Manchester might also take place at such a pace as to make our clean air zone unnecessary too?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture, responded that the Council was determined to tackle the health threats and inequalities experienced by communities across Greater Manchester caused by high levels of air pollution on local roads, as soon as possible. To achieve this goal, there had been instructed by government to introduce a Category C Clean Air Zone across the city-region, that was why we were consulting with businesses and residents across Greater Manchester for their thoughts on the key elements of the Clean Air Zone, and the proposals for the supporting funds that have been developed, while further considering the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

The feedback from the consultation would be used to inform the final plans and to understand how best to ensure that residents were not exposed to illegal levels of air pollution. This approach had also been agreed with the Government.

6. Councillor Garry asked the following question:  
We are lucky in Failsworth to have a fabulous team of volunteers who turn up every month to clean the canal that runs through our district. However, the coronavirus has stopped this, and now we are receiving complaints from residents that the canal is becoming full of rubbish. I understand that Oldham Council pays a considerable amount of money to the Waterway and Canal Trust to maintain the canal. Please can you advise how much is paid and how often it is maintained on an annual basis?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture, responded that in 2000 the Council entered into an agreement with the Canals and Rivers Trust to take on the responsibility for the maintenance of the canals, inclusive of the waterway and associated landscape immediately surrounding it. Each year Oldham Council contributed around £127K to the Trust and it had obviously been a difficult year with many more people accessing these walks and unfortunately littering. The Trust had a responsibility to clean the area and the Council would continue to work with them to improve the level of cleanliness, picking up on the



complaints reported.



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7. Councillor Taylor asked the following question:  
Over the last few weeks, Cllrs in Chadderton Central Ward have been contacted by residents regarding vehicles driving along the pavement to access properties and driving over or parking on the grass verge. Behaviour such as this is dangerous and inconsiderate, this is not just a problem in one area in Chadderton Central examples can be seen on Denton Lane, Foxdenton Lane, Broadway and I know it happens in other parts of the borough. Could the relevant Cabinet Member, please advise us what if anything can be done to prevent drivers from carrying out these dangerous manoeuvres that place pedestrians, cyclists and other car drivers at risk and causes damage to the little bits of green space we have in many areas?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture, responded that the Highways Act allows the Council to construct footway vehicle crossings and charge the costs of constructing them to the particular resident. However as Denton Lane is a classified road, any such footway crossing would first require planning permission. Therefore it would be inappropriate for the Council to exercise this Highways Act power until it was satisfied that all planning requirements had been met.

Illegally driving over the footway was a Moving Traffic Issue and a matter for the Police to enforce. Measures could be taken by the Council to help mitigate this activity with the installation of strategically-placed street furniture including bollards, guardrails and planters; however, these interventions would have to be funded from an appropriate but very limited highway budget and would also require ongoing maintenance.

8. Councillor Williamson asked the following question:  
I have a suggestion that I would like to ask the Cabinet Member to consider. I cannot understand why the WEEE - Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment - and recycling sections are not at the front entrance of the tip where 'all including businesses' can take their old electrical items back without entering the main tip. As a surcharge for WEEE waste has already been included in the sales price this should be possible at no cost to the Council / waste authority as these recycling schemes are all funded. Can I ask the Cabinet Member if they could raise this suggestion with waste authority colleagues to see if they can be implemented?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Culture, responded that the site layout was the responsibility of the contractor Suez who must maintain safety at the site. Whilst the issue could be



raised with the WDA who managed the contract, the concern was that the HWRC was contracted for domestic waste only and therefore care must be taken to ensure that any businesses producing commercial waste dispose of their waste through permitted channels. As WEEE is classified as a hazardous waste this required care to be taken on its correct management through to disposal and therefore siting in a position which enables clear supervision is key.

9. Councillor McLaren asked the following question:  
In 2015 the Kingfisher Learning Trust applied to the Department for Education to open a new Free School called Halcyon Way for children with Severe and Medium Learning Difficulties. The Trust who are committed to working in partnership with the council, were successful in their bid and the new school will be sited close to the Kingfisher Special School that already provides outstanding educational provision for children with a wide variety of special needs from across the borough. I am also very pleased to see that work is underway to replace the hydrotherapy pool situated on the Kingfisher site, this is a facility that will be of great benefit to the school and the borough. Could the Cabinet Member for Education, please update us on progress with both these projects including dates for completion?

Councillor Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Education, responded that the DfE and Kingfisher Learning Trust had both confirmed that the Halcyon Way Free School was expected to open in January 2022, providing up to 80 additional places in the first year of operation and growing up to the full 140 place capacity over time. The confirmed opening date was much later than originally expected, however, work had now started on site. Council officers would continue to monitor the progress on site and work with the Kingfisher Learning Trust to support the delivery of the project in line with the January 2022 timeline. Council Officers from the SEND service continued to work with The Kingfisher Learning Trust to ensure that they identified and planned for a successful transition for the children who would be attending the school. This formed part of the wider strategy to ensure a strong Oldham based provision for children and young people with SEND within mainstream and special school settings. The new hydrotherapy pool at Kingfisher school was also almost complete. Despite the challenges of the various lockdowns the Kingfisher Learning Trust had managed the successful completion of the project. The hydrotherapy pool was an outstanding facility for the children at Kingfisher school to enjoy using and would also be available to other children, young people and adults to commission. It was expected that the facility would be available to Kingfisher school children in January 2021, with access for other children, young

people and adults in the following weeks.



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.

c 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 19 October 2020, 9 November 2020 and 16 November 2020 were submitted.

Members raised the following questions:

Councillor Williamson asked the following question related to Cabinet 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020 Item 5 - GMSF Publication Draft 2020 Page 1

“Given that the latest draft proposals of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework for consultation have now been pulled following the vote by Stockport Council, will the Leader now consider developing instead a Local Plan for Oldham that is focused upon meeting the current and future housing needs of the people of this Borough rather than continuing with the folly of working up a new joint plan that is more focused on the ambitions of the Greater Manchester Mayor?”

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that the Council would consider the options and choose which was best for Oldham. The opportunity was now available to offset more homes off the greenbelt and allocate them to places in Greater Manchester that wanted them. Whatever Plan was chosen, it would be aligned to the ambitions of Oldham and not anyone outside the Borough.

Councillor Harkness asked the following question related to Cabinet 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020 Item 5 - GMSF Publication Draft 2020 Page 1

“Given that the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework proposals for Oldham will now have to be redrawn or an alternate Local Plan adopted, I would like to draw the Leader’s attention to the merits of the Chew Valley Green Belt Action Group’s Alternative Plan for GMSF Site 15 – the Fletchers Mill site. This would deliver the required housing on the derelict Fletchers Mill site, and save the remaining undeveloped Green Belt in the Chew Valley. Given this Council’s stated policy is to develop on Brownfield first, this plan appears to be worth exploring. Can I therefore ask the Leader if he will agree to Council officers working with the Action Group to bring these proposals forward as part of the new plan?”



Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Housing, responded that the Director of Economy and I have already met the Chew Valley Action Group on the 3rd December to discuss their proposal and are meeting them again on the 18th December. A representative of the landowner was also present. The Action Group was working to provide additional detail in support of their proposal and officers had responded to their requests for information – the viability assessments carried out for the GMSF were still available on the GMCA website. I made it clear at the meeting that we welcome any proposal which would enable us to deliver the Government’s imposed Local Housing Need requirement on brownfield rather than Greenbelt land.

It remained the case that any proposal must meet the NPPF requirements – land must be available, developable and deliverable within the plan period. It must also be a financially viable proposition.

We would welcome any planning application for the Fletcher’s Mill site (the brownfield land) at any time.

Councillor Sykes asked the following question related to Cabinet 9th November 2020 Item 5 - GMSF Publication Draft 2020 Page 1 “I understand that on 11 December the AGMA Executive Board accepted that the refusal by Stockport Council at its meeting on 3 December to adopt the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (I quote) ‘signals the end of the GMSF as a joint plan of the 10’ and that instead ‘a Joint Development Plan of the 9’ should be developed. I recognise that this meeting is being held only days after that decision was made, but given the significant public interest in this issue, could the Leader please give me some indication of what the timescale will be for the development of this plan, how and when elected members and the public will be consulted, and when it might be brought back in the future to a full meeting of this Council for adoption or rejection?”

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that this was correct - at AGMA Executive Board on 11 December 2020 members agreed in principle to the preparation of a Joint Plan of the nine authorities and instructed officers to begin work to

- a) Review the evidence base; and
- b) Review the spatial strategy and thematic policies.

In order to progress this work it was proposed that a joint committee of the nine authorities needed to be established to co-ordinate and develop this new plan. A further report was to be brought back to AGMA Executive Board setting out the issues and timescales involved.

At present an indication of timescales could not be provided for its preparation, consultation or approval, however members would be informed as soon as this information was confirmed.

In parallel, officers were instructed to review the timescales, issues and opportunities for Oldham’s Local Plan to ensure brownfield development sites were prioritised and that policies were updated and approved in a timely manner to meet the 2023 deadlines.

Councillor Taylor asked the following question related to Cabinet

16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 Item 8 – Green Homes Local Authority Delivery Scheme



“I am pleased to see that Oldham will receive a share of the government’s Green Homes Grant Scheme, which will save households money and boost efficiency of home energy across the Borough. The funding was originally part of a scheme designed to refurbish properties on the Crossley Estate in Chadderton Central Ward, to modernise older properties to a decent standard. Due to spending cuts, the scheme did not proceed. Homes on the estate were built post-war and were cold and expensive to heat without additional insulation, and the Ward councillors and MP had continually lobbied for additional insulation for these homes. Residents had experienced damp and cold conditions for too long. Improving the homes would not just reduce bills but would improve the health and wellbeing of the residents who had suffered the worst effects of fuel poverty. Could the Cabinet Member for Housing say when the planned improvements will start?”

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Housing, responded that the scheme was in two parts:

Private Sector Housing:

- 4,816 letters have been posted to targeted postcodes in Oldham (EPC rating E, F or G and household income below £30k);
- So far, E.ON had received 46 enquires from Oldham residents of which 28 had qualified (out of the 301 target for GM);
- Homes surveys were being booked-in but works will only start in the new year.

Social Housing:

- A letter from the Ward Councillors had been delivered to the 65 Council homes and 4 RTB homes on the Crossley Estate;
- Works were scheduled to begin in February 2021 and would be completed by the end of March 2021 (subject to weather and COVID-19 restrictions).
- In addition, we have been able to bid for additional funding via the GMCA and Oldham’s bid included 60 solar PV systems for our PFI 2 older persons bungalows plus 31 External Wall Insulation and 10 Cavity Wall Insulation on our PFI 4 Primrose Bank estate. This was subject to ratification by the GMCA later this week and would then be forwarded to BEIS

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 19 October 2020, 9 November 2020 and 16 November 2020 be noted.
2. The questions and responses provided be noted.

d Questions on Joint Arrangements

Council was asked to note the minutes of the following Joint Authority and Partnership meetings and the relevant spokespersons to respond to questions from Members.

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



Greater Manchester Combined Authority 2020	30 October
AGMA Executive Board 2020	30 October
Police, Fire and Crime Panel September 2020	29
Peak Park District Authority 2020	4 September
2020	2 October
Health and Wellbeing Board	21 July 2020
Greater Manchester Transport Committee 2020	9 October

Councillor Williamson asked the following question on Police, Fire and Crime Panel 29th September 2020 Minute PCFP/08/20 – 2020 Officer Uplift:

Please can I ask how many of the new 246 police officers allocated to local policing roles will be allocated to police the Borough of Oldham?

And can we have a breakdown please, as I have asked for previously, of the officers who have been recruited, specifically how many of these new officers are from BME communities and how many are women?

Councillor Steve Williams, Deputy Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response and Oldham Council representative on the Police and Crime Panel responded that a report had been produced on the allocation of police in Greater Manchester, which he would send out to all Councillors. Increasing the numbers of officers had been made difficult as the training facilities were no longer there. Currently Greater Manchester was 1,300 short of its quota before austerity.


Councillor Al-Hamdani asked the following question on Police, Fire and Crime Panel 29th September 2020 Minute PCFP/09/20 – GMP Crime Data – 2020:

As this reported reduction came before the acknowledgement of 80,000 crimes which were not included in the crime figures, what would be the impact on this if those 80,000 crimes were to be included?

Also, given that reports suggest that many cases are being closed too quickly – in particular with 70% of domestic violence cases concluded out of court, and 80% of victims not consulted on that – what would be the impact of this on the crime figures if they were not closed too quickly?

And finally, given the regular complaints in addition to this from residents that it often takes hours to get through on 101 to report crimes, with the resulting impact in reducing reporting rates, does this mean that crime figures are being artificially reduced even further?





Councillor Steve Williams, Deputy Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response and Oldham Council representative on the Police and Crime Panel responded that the 80,000 crimes had now been collated into the system. GMP had been criticised on inspection for their crime recording and, at the meeting of the Police and Crime Panel that afternoon, the Assistant Chief Constable had acknowledged there had been failings and apologised for them. Councillor Williams would find out what difference timely recording would have made and provide Councillor Al-Hamdani with this information.

In relation to the 101 number, in the month of December 2018, 3,500 calls were recorded as having been made to that number on matters that were nothing to do with the police. Add to these all the legitimate calls and it could not be surprising, of the fault of the police, that the demand could not be met.

Councillor Davis asked the following question on Greater Manchester Transport Committee 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020 GMTCC 75/20 - Forthcoming Changes To Bus Services:

Councillor Fielding was offered a conversation on how to mitigate the effects of the loss of the 396 bus service between Park Cakes and Newton Heath, which served Failsworth. Could councillor Fielding provide an update on the outcome?

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that in addition to the conversation, a local campaign had been run in Failsworth and he thanked Councillor Davis for his assistance with this. Many local residents had signed a petition to see the bus service reinstated. Unfortunately, the cuts to the 396 service had gone ahead and there had been no connection from Newton Heath to Ashton for a couple of weeks. Through the efforts of the local Councillors in galvanising opposition to the cut, the bus service had been reinstated as the 397, which connected Newton Heath to Ashton via a more-direct route through Failsworth. Councillor Fielding thanked the local Councillors and stated he had personally had more thank-you letters from Failsworth residents on this issue than any other.

Councillor Hulme asked the following question in relation to Greater Manchester Combined Authority 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020 GMCA 178/20 GM Brownfield Housing Fund ("BHF") Tranche 1 Spend Allocation (Key Decision):

The complexity of some of the Oldham brownfield sites meant the benefit from this fund was limited due to tight timescales. Had revenue or officer support been forthcoming from GMCA to assist with bids for Tranche 2?

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that significant funds were required to remediate brownfield sites in Oldham to enable them to be developed for housing and avoid development of greenbelt sites. An offer had been made of financial support to assist with capacity to bid for funds in Tranche 2 to remediate brownfield sites, which had not yet been forthcoming. There was some good news as,



even without this additional capacity, an ambitious bid for various sites had been submitted in December.



Councillor Byrne asked the following question in relation to Greater Manchester Transport Committee 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020 GMTCC 72/20 - Impact Of Road Safety Schemes and GMTCC 73/20 - Cycling And Walking Update And Forward Look Report:

Is there a way of circumventing national speed limits on rural lanes such as those in the Saddleworth wards, which are narrow and have no footpaths? There are several very busy roads in the area with speed limits of 40 and 50 miles per hour, with no footpaths and limited visibility, that are regularly used by walkers and recreational users. Can Councillor Fielding ask the Greater Manchester Transport Committee to look at the particular problems with rural roads and walking routes which are being developed.

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills responded that this was a matter to be directed to the relevant cabinet Member outside of the meeting. Concerns about speed limits on rural roads were understood, especially as modern vehicles could reach speeds more quickly than those around when national speed limits were set. He would find a way for Councillor Byrne to take her concerns to where action could be considered and could offer personal support for her comments.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The minutes of the Joint Authorities and Partnership meetings as detailed in the report be noted.
2. The questions and responses provided be noted.

10

**NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS**

Council were asked to note that the motions would be debated in the order received by the Chief Executive and not as printed in the summons.

Motion 1 – Fair Grade for All 2021

Councillor Mushtaq MOVED and Councillor Goodwin SECONDED the following MOTION:

“After the fiasco of this’s A-level and GCSE results, this Council is keen to ensure fairness for students next year. On 19 August, trade union leaders wrote to Gavin Williamson MP outlining what steps the Government must take to ensure no student is disadvantaged, as did Kate Green MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education on 10 November. Students and teachers urgently need clarity on A-levels and GCSEs, in particular what contingency is in place if exams have to be cancelled again next year. It is imperative that the distressing experiences of 2020 A-level students are never repeated. The chaos of 2020 justifies a wider review of how qualifications are awarded.

This Council calls on government to:

- Create a level playing field across the country for all students sitting exams next year. The pandemic has hit

and will continue to hit the regions to varying degrees. The government has hinted at flexibility to boundary grades but must go further and commit to a regional approach to norm-referencing performance to reflect the varying degrees of school attendance levels across the regions rather than setting up an expert group to monitor the situation.

- Put in place arrangements to make sure that no student misses out on the opportunity to receive their qualifications as a result of having to self-isolate during next year's exam period. This government must work with exam boards to make reserve papers available in all subjects. This would give students who miss an exam the opportunity to sit it later.
- Publish its plans now for a worst-case scenario whereby exams cannot go ahead next year due to the impact of the pandemic. A credible Plan B is required that must have the confidence of parents, teachers, school leaders and unions.

This Council calls on the Leader and Chief Executive of Oldham Council to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Education asking him to respond as a matter of urgency to all the above points.
- To write to Oldham's three MPs, highlighting the motion and asking that they raise the issues in Parliament as a matter of urgency."

Councillor Jacques spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor Ibrahim spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor Moores spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor Harkness spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor H Gloster spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor Mushtaq exercised his right of reply.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in FAVOUR of the MOTION. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** that the Leader and Chief Executive of Oldham Council be asked to:

1. Write to the Secretary of State for Education asking him to respond as a matter of urgency to all the above points.
2. To write to Oldham's three MPs, highlighting the motion and asking that they raise the issues in Parliament as a matter of urgency.

#### Motion 2 – Spending review November 2020

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Ali SECONDED the following MOTION:

"This Council regrets that

- The Chancellor failed to address the systemic underfunding of local Councils, opting instead for a series

of one-off measures and further transferring the burden of paying for essential services to local Council Tax payers who have in many cases already been hard hit by the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic and years of Tory austerity. The Spending Review announced a £2.2bn increase in Councils' Core Spending Power. Of this sum, £1.5bn is assumed to come from Councils increasing Council Tax by 5% - the maximum the Government will allow without a referendum. Only £600m of this was badged as new money and £300m of this is recycled so is not new.

- The Government has not brought forward a plan to reform funding and provision of adult social care as promised and instead has given councils the power to raise a further adult social care precept – indeed it assumes that this will be raised within the Core Spending Power increase. The precept can increase by 3% for 2021/22, but by using the ability to raise Council Tax as a means to generate income for adult social care, it's not linking to need. Those areas that can generate more Council Tax can raise more funding.
- While the Government has provided significant additional funding for 2020/21, including over £23m of general Grant funding for Oldham Council this year, this still leaves a shortfall and the Government continues to break its promise to 'do whatever it takes' to support public services tackling the pandemic including fully reimbursing councils and schools for additional costs and reduced income
- While receiving over £14m of grants for specific purposes in Oldham this year is welcome, these grants have come with substantial restrictions from Government on how they can be used. Such funding could be used more effectively if there was greater flexibility.
- The Spending Review did not include additional funding for public health. This runs contrary to addressing the stark health inequalities exposed by COVID-19 and levelling up our communities. Keeping people healthy and well throughout their lives reduces pressure on the NHS and social care.
- The Government has not temporarily removed the No Recourse to Public Funds condition. This would reduce public health risks and ease the pressure on homelessness services by enabling vulnerable people to access welfare benefits, who are currently unable to do so because of their immigration status. The Chancellor also failed to commit to making permanent the £20 a week supplement to Universal Credit that has been crucial to protecting people from poverty.

This Council condemns the wage freeze imposed on 2m public sector workers including firefighters, the police, teachers and local authority staff. Many of these workers have kept the country going during the pandemic and deserve more than a real term pay cut.

This Council believes that only with the right funding and freedoms, can councils lead local efforts to level up the stark inequalities the pandemic has exposed and level up the economy so that it benefits everyone.

This Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to:

- The Local Government Association to urge a vigorous campaign for a long term local government funding settlement, for reform of adult social care and adequate funding of children's social care, education and social housing in the context of a new settlement reversing the centralisation of powers and decision-making that has been evident even before the pandemic.
- The borough's three MPs urging that they oppose the public sector pay freeze and support efforts to secure the necessary funding and freedoms for local authorities.
- Therese Coffey MP, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, calling on her to make the £20 a week Universal Credit supplement permanent."

## AMENDMENT

Councillor C. Gloster MOVED and Councillor Hamblett SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

"Insert after the end of bullet point 6 which ends 'crucial to protecting people from poverty' a new bullet point 7 which reads:

- The Spending Review included no additional uplift to the Carers' Allowance. 900,000 full-time unpaid carers rely on Carer's Allowance – but at just £67.25 a week, it's not nearly enough. More than a third of those on Carer's Allowance are struggling to make ends meet. Many have been struggling for months, often relying on foodbanks to feed themselves and the people they care for.

Insert at the very end of point 3 of the resolution after 'permanent' the following 'and to immediately increase the Carers Allowance by £20 per week.'

The amended motion to read:

"This Council regrets that

- The Chancellor failed to address the systemic underfunding of local Councils, opting instead for a series of one-off measures and further transferring the burden of paying for essential services to local Council Tax payers who have in many cases already been hard hit by the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic and years of Tory austerity. The Spending Review announced a £2.2bn increase in Councils' Core Spending Power. Of this sum, £1.5bn is assumed to come from Councils increasing Council Tax by 5% - the maximum the Government will allow without a referendum. Only £600m of this was badged as new money and £300m of this is recycled so is not new.

- The Government has not brought forward a plan to reform funding and provision of adult social care as promised and instead has given councils the power to raise a further adult social care precept – indeed it assumes that this will be raised within the Core Spending Power increase. The precept can increase by 3% for 2021/22, but by using the ability to raise Council Tax as a means to generate income for adult social care, it's not linking to need. Those areas that can generate more Council Tax can raise more funding.
- While the Government has provided significant additional funding for 2020/21, including over £23m of general Grant funding for Oldham Council this year, this still leaves a shortfall and the Government continues to break its promise to 'do whatever it takes' to support public services tackling the pandemic including fully reimbursing councils and schools for additional costs and reduced income
- While receiving over £14m of grants for specific purposes in Oldham this year is welcome, these grants have come with substantial restrictions from Government on how they can be used. Such funding could be used more effectively if there was greater flexibility.
- The Spending Review did not include additional funding for public health. This runs contrary to addressing the stark health inequalities exposed by COVID-19 and levelling up our communities. Keeping people healthy and well throughout their lives reduces pressure on the NHS and social care.
- The Government has not temporarily removed the No Recourse to Public Funds condition. This would reduce public health risks and ease the pressure on homelessness services by enabling vulnerable people to access welfare benefits, who are currently unable to do so because of their immigration status. The Chancellor also failed to commit to making permanent the £20 a week supplement to Universal Credit that has been crucial to protecting people from poverty.
- The Spending Review included no additional uplift to the Carers' Allowance. 900,000 full-time unpaid carers rely on Carer's Allowance – but at just £67.25 a week, it's not nearly enough. More than a third of those on Carer's Allowance are struggling to make ends meet. Many have been struggling for months, often relying on foodbanks to feed themselves and the people they care for.

This Council condemns the wage freeze imposed on 2m public sector workers including firefighters, the police, teachers and local authority staff. Many of these workers have kept the country going during the pandemic and deserve more than a real term pay cut.

This Council believes that only with the right funding and freedoms, can councils lead local efforts to level up the stark inequalities the pandemic has exposed and level up the economy so that it benefits everyone.

This Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to:



- The Local Government Association to urge a vigorous campaign for a long term local government funding settlement, for reform of adult social care and adequate funding of children’s social care, education and social housing in the context of a new settlement reversing the centralisation of powers and decision-making that has been evident even before the pandemic.
- The borough’s three MPs urging that they oppose the public sector pay freeze and support efforts to secure the necessary funding and freedoms for local authorities.
- Therese Coffey MP, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, calling on her to make the £20 a week Universal Credit supplement permanent and to immediately increase the Carers Allowance by £20 per week.”

Councillor Jabbar exercised his right of reply and indicated he accepted the amendment.

A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT, which was CARRIED and became the SUBSTANTIVE MOTION.

On being put to the vote, 53 votes were cast in FAVOUR of the SUBSTANTIVE MOTION and 0 votes were cast AGAINST with 3 ABSTENTIONS. The SUBSTANTIVE MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** that the Chief Executive be asked to write to:

- The Local Government Association to urge a vigorous campaign for a long term local government funding settlement, for reform of adult social care and adequate funding of children’s social care, education and social housing in the context of a new settlement reversing the centralisation of powers and decision-making (This Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to:
  - The Local Government Association to urge a vigorous campaign for a long term local government funding settlement, for reform of adult social care and adequate funding of children’s social care, education and social housing in the context of a new settlement reversing the centralisation of powers and decision-making that has been evident even before the pandemic.
  - The borough’s three MPs urging that they oppose the public sector pay freeze and support efforts to secure the necessary funding and freedoms for local authorities.
  - Therese Coffey MP, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, calling on her to make the £20 a week Universal Credit supplement permanent and to immediately increase the Carers Allowance by £20 per week that has been evident even before the pandemic.
  - The borough’s three MPs urging that they oppose the public sector pay freeze and support efforts to secure the necessary funding and freedoms for local authorities.
  - Therese Coffey MP, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, calling on her to make the £20 a week Universal



Credit supplement permanent and to immediately increase the Carers Allowance by £20 per week



**Oldham**  
Council

11

## **NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS**

### Motion 1 – Tracking Stalkers and Domestic Abusers

Councillor C. Gloster MOVED and Councillor Williamson SECONDED the following MOTION:

“Council notes that:

- Stalking and domestic abuse are crimes which are insidious and terrifying, the majority committed by men against women. Offenders go from victim to victim, yet many remain undetected and unconvicted.
- The evidence shows that domestic abuse has become more prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. Some stalkers and domestic abusers go on to commit murder, and tragically the domestic homicide rate, mostly of women, continues to increase.
- Despite clear warning signs that such crimes are often repeated and follow a pattern, much offending behaviour remains undetected by the Police, probation and other agencies, and offenders are left at large.
- Although the provisions of the Domestic Abuse Bill now before Parliament are welcome, the Bill is manifestly deficient in not addressing the importance of robustly tracking and apprehending these offenders.

Council further notes that:

- Whilst the Domestic Abuse Bill would place Clare’s Law (the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme) on a statutory footing, this will place the onus upon victims to come forward to seek information about their partner or a family member and this can sometimes place the victim in danger.
- There is no duty on police services to identify, track and manage stalkers and domestic abusers.

Council believes that:

- It is imperative that serial stalkers and domestic abusers are prioritised and proactively identified, assessed and managed by Police, probation and other relevant agencies, so that intelligence can be shared about their offending behaviour to hold them to account and close down their behaviour.
- The details of stalkers and domestic abusers should be included on the Violent and Sexual Offender’s Register and managed via the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to the Home Secretary asking her to make these changes to more effectively track and apprehend stalkers and domestic abusers, and to copy in our three Members of Parliament and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester asking them to make

representations to the Home Secretary in support of the Council's position.”

Councillor Chadderton spoke in support of the Motion.  
Councillor Shah spoke in support of the Motion.  
Councillor Al-Hamdani spoke in support of the Motion.  
Councillor Ball spoke in support of the Motion.  
Councillor S Bashforth spoke in support of the Motion.  
Councillor Shuttleworth spoke in support of the Motion.  
Councillor Surjan spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor C Gloster exercised his right of reply.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in FAVOUR of the MOTION. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** that the Chief Executive be asked to write to the Home Secretary asking her to make these changes to more effectively track and apprehend stalkers and domestic abusers, and to copy in our three Members of Parliament and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester asking them to make representations to the Home Secretary in support of the Council's position.

#### Motion 2 – Young Carers Action Day

Councillor H. Gloster MOVED and Councillor Hamblett SECONDED the following MOTION:

“Council commends the young people in this borough who selflessly provide care for others.

Council notes that:

- Recent research shows that one in five secondary school children may be a young carer. For many, their caring journey begins at a much younger age.
- Caring for someone can be very isolating, worrying and stressful. For young carers, this can negatively impact on their experiences and outcomes in education, having a lasting effect on their life chances.
- Each year, The Carers Trust has organised a Young Carers' Action Awareness Day. In 2021, this will be renamed Young Carers' Action Day and marked on March 16.
- The purpose of this day is to raise public awareness of the challenges faced by young people and young adults because of their caring role, and to campaign for greater support for young carers to meet their needs.

Council resolves to:

- Promote Young Carers Action Day as widely as possible on an annual basis, particularly to young carers and their families.
- Ask the Health and Wellbeing Board to work with the Carers' Trust, the Connexions Young Carers' Project and the Youth Council to establish an annual event in Oldham

to mark this date to which young carers and their families can be invited in person or online, and at which appropriate information and services can be accessed.”



Councillor Stretton spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor H Gloster did not exercise her right of reply.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in FAVOUR of the MOTION. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The Council would promote Young Carers Action Day as widely as possible on an annual basis, particularly to young carers and their families.
2. The Health and Wellbeing Board be asked to work with the Carers' Trust, the Connexions Young Carers' Project and the Youth Council to establish an annual event in Oldham to mark this date to which young carers and their families can be invited in person or online, and at which appropriate information and services can be accessed

Motion 3 – Turning over an old leaf

Councillor Al-Hamdani MOVED and Councillor Harkness SECONDED the following ALTERED MOTION:

“Council notes:

- That the revised NPPF (2018) put protection for ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees on a par with the best of our built heritage.
- The NPPF states that: ‘When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:.... c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and an ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons.’
- That over 1200 Ancient Woodland sites across the UK are under threat from development.
- That other local plans have included protections on Ancient Woodlands in their local plans, with recommended wording provided in the Woodland Trust’s document ‘Planning for Ancient Woodland’.

Council recognises:

- That the forthcoming Local Plan provides an opportunity for us to ensure that Ancient Woodland is protected across our Borough;
- That protection is required before the Local Plan is delivered to ensure that Ancient Woodland remains protected in the interim period;
- That not all Ancient Woodland has been properly identified, and it is important that a clear route is available to identify and protect Ancient Woodland across the borough.

Council resolves:

- To consider inclusion of the protection of Ancient Woodland into its forthcoming Local Plan, and include that as a theme within the forthcoming Issues and Options consultations on the emerging Local Plan.
- To write to the Secretary of State to ensure that any changes to the planning system do not remove the rights of Local Councils to protect Ancient Woodland as part of their planning policies
- Subject to any adoption of a policy on Ancient Woodland as part of the Local Plan, to include in later consultation an opportunity for residents to identify Ancient Woodland sites throughout the borough which should be covered by protection.”

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in FAVOUR of the MOTION. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The Council would consider inclusion of the protection of Ancient Woodland into its forthcoming Local Plan, and include that as a theme within the forthcoming Issues and Options consultations on the emerging Local Plan.
2. The Secretary of State be written to, to ensure that any changes to the planning system do not remove the rights of Local Councils to protect Ancient Woodland as part of their planning policies
3. Subject to any adoption of a policy on Ancient Woodland as part of the Local Plan, an opportunity for residents to identify Ancient Woodland sites throughout the borough which should be covered by protection, be included in later consultation.

Motion 4 – GMSF

Councillor Sheldon MOVED and Councillor Curley SECONDED the following MOTION:

“Following the withdrawal of the vote on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) report on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC) meeting, and following the vote to reject the GMSF at Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, that OMBC believes that the GMSF is ultimately no longer fit for purpose.

Oldham Borough Council Conservatives reject the need to build on our Greenbelt. We believe that the GMSF has damaged the public trust due to the top down nature of the plans. That is why we are asking that OMBC listen to local communities and that OMBC explore the use of neighbourhood plans for each ward/s, area or parish enabling communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work. We note that a neighbourhood plan attains the same legal status as a local plan (and other documents that form part of the statutory development plan) once it has been approved at a referendum as stated under the neighbourhood planning act 2017.

We believe that the people must have the final say on any future plan/s or proposal/s for their area.

We also note that should the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority continue in pursuing plans for a Greater Manchester wide plan whether GMSF or something else, that OMBC look at mechanisms to first ratify the matter with the people of the OMBC area impacted by any plan first. We suggest that this is held through a referendum.

Given these factors, and until a satisfactory resolution is found, that this Council resolves:

- That the OMBC Leader write to the Mayor of Greater Manchester:
  - Asking him to clarify if the Mayor of Greater Manchester and Greater Manchester Combined Authority intend to pursue the GMSF or a new Greater Manchester wide plan that excludes Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- That OMBC commits to do the following:
  - Take full advantage of HM Government and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak's £400 million fund aimed at creating more homes on brownfield land, as part of a package of Budget measures intended to boost housing delivery.
  - Complete a full and accurate online register detailing and listing all the Brownfield sites available in the OMBC area and any estimated costs associated with repurposing the land.
  - Always look to build on brownfield or derelict sites first or on sites with existing planning permission.
  - That OMBC look to build beautifully, by building homes that have garden space and take consideration of local aesthetics and existing building styles.
  - By converting long-term empty mills, shops, and offices into homes; and that existing long-term empty homes should also be brought back into use.
  - Look at adopting a neighbourhood plan for each ward/s, area or parish as it attains the same legal status as a local plan (and other documents that form part of the statutory development plan) once it has been approved at a referendum as stated in the neighbourhood planning act 2017.
  - That should a new, modified or existing Greater Manchester wide plan emerge that OMBC look at mechanisms to first ratify the matter with the wards or areas in the OMBC area through a referendum.
  - Adopt and where appropriate strengthen the declaration of interests procedure and register of interests and or all other policies where there could be a perceived or actual conflict of interest/s either for Councillors or Council employees so as to make sure that members do not leave themselves open to (or perceived to be open to) improper

influence through the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, or otherwise.”



## AMENDMENT

Councillor Harkness MOVED and Councillor Al-Hamdani SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

### “Paragraph 1

After ‘report’, insert ‘at the Full Meeting of Oldham Council’, delete after 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020, ‘Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC) meeting’  
Delete ‘OMBC’, insert ‘this Council’. Delete ‘ultimately’.

### Paragraph 2

Delete first sentence: ‘Oldham Borough Council Conservatives reject the need to build on our Greenbelt.’

Delete in the original second sentence: ‘We believe that t’, start sentence ‘The GMSF’.

Delete in original third sentence: ‘That is why we are asking that OMBC’, start sentence ‘Oldham Council should’. Delete ‘OMBC that’ between ‘and’ and ‘explore’.

Delete in the original fourth sentence: ‘We note’, start sentence with ‘Council notes’. Capitalise Neighbourhood Planning Act.

### Paragraph 3

Reword paragraph as follows incorporating some of the original wording:

‘Despite the vote approved by the AGMA Executive Board on 11 December 2020 to proceed with a ‘Joint Development Plan Document of the nine authorities’, Council believes that the people must have the final say on any future plan/s or proposal/s for their area through a referendum.’

### Paragraph 4

Delete in its entirety.

In the resolution, delete the original bullet point in its entirety.

Insert as a new first bullet point:

- That the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, asking him to reconsider the following issues:
  - Reform of the current system of deciding requirements for new housing. This is imposed upon local government by central government, and requires much greater development in Northern towns such as Oldham than in many Southern towns and cities;
  - Current housing needs figures across Greater Manchester are based on outdated data, and should arguably be much lower;
  - The Government’s analysis of how well local authorities are meeting housing targets ignores the fact that developers control how many applications are brought forward and delivered, and local authorities are not assessed on their delivery of approved applications.



- There needs to be a significant increase in the amount of funding made available to local government to support the remediation of Brownfield sites for housing development.

The original third bullet point becomes the second bullet point etc.

In this second bullet point

Delete 'That OMBC commits to do the following', replace with 'To commit to'.

In the first second-level bullet point, replace 'Take' with 'Taking'

In the second second-level bullet point, replace 'Complete' with 'Completing'

Delete the third second-level bullet point in its entirety.

Replace the fourth second-level bullet point with 'Encouraging the building of beautiful, environmentally-sound, and spacious homes, that meet the highest green standards, that are accessible and suitably equipped to meet the needs of people with disabilities, and have sufficient space and light for residents and – where possible – have garden space; and that complement local aesthetics and existing building styles.

Delete the fifth second-level bullet point in its entirety.

Insert a new fifth second-level bullet point which reads:

'Reaffirming the policy first outlined in the motion approved by Council at the meeting held on 22 March 2017 that: 'Council firmly believes that new housing development should first take place on brownfield or derelict sites, on sites with existing planning permission; and by converting long-term empty mills, shops and offices into homes; and that existing long-term empty homes should also be brought back into use, before any consideration is given to allocating green-belt or other protected open land for housing'.

In the sixth second-level bullet point, replace 'adopting' with 'Promoting the adoption of'.

In the eighth second-level bullet point, replace 'adopt' with 'adopting' and 'strengthen' with 'strengthening'."

Amended motion to read:

"Following the withdrawal of the vote on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) report at the Full Meeting of Oldham Council on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and following the vote to reject the GMSF at Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, this Council believes that the GMSF is no longer fit for purpose. The GMSF has damaged public trust due to the top-down nature of the plans. Oldham Council should listen to local communities and explore the use of neighbourhood plans for each ward/s, area or parish enabling communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work. Council notes that a neighbourhood plan attains the same legal status as a local plan (and other documents that form part of the statutory development plan) once it has been approved at a referendum as stated under the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

Despite the vote approved by the AGMA Executive Board on 11 December 2020 to proceed with a 'Joint Development Plan Document of the nine authorities', Council believes that the

people must have the final say on any future plan/s or proposal/s for their area through a referendum. Given these factors, and until a satisfactory resolution is found, that this Council resolves:

- That the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, asking him to reconsider the following issues:
  - Reform of the current system of deciding requirements for new housing. This is imposed upon local government by central government, and requires much greater development in Northern towns such as Oldham than in many Southern towns and cities;
  - Current housing needs figures across Greater Manchester are based on outdated data, and should arguably be much lower;
  - The Government's analysis of how well local authorities are meeting housing targets ignores the fact that developers control how many applications are brought forward and delivered, and local authorities are not assessed on their delivery of approved applications.
  - There needs to be a significant increase in the amount of funding made available to local government to support the remediation of Brownfield sites for housing development.

To commit to:

- Taking full advantage of HM Government and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak's £400 million fund aimed at creating more homes on brownfield land, as part of a package of Budget measures intended to boost housing delivery.
- Completing a full and accurate online register detailing and listing all the Brownfield sites available in the OMBC area and any estimated costs associated with repurposing the land.
- Encouraging the building of beautiful, environmentally-sound, and spacious homes that meet the highest green standards, that are accessible and suitably equipped to meet the needs of people with disabilities, and have sufficient space and light for residents and – and where possible – have garden space; and that complement local aesthetics and existing building styles.
- Reaffirming the policy first outlined in the motion approved by Council at the meeting held on 22 March 2017 that: 'Council firmly believes that new housing development should first take place on brownfield or derelict sites, on sites with existing planning permission; and by converting long-term empty mills, shops and offices into homes; and that existing long-term empty homes should also be brought back into use, before any consideration is given to allocating green-belt or other protected open land for housing'.
- Promoting the adoption of neighbourhood plan for each ward/s, area or parish.

- That should a new, modified or existing Greater Manchester wide plan emerge that OMBC look at mechanisms to first ratify the matter with the wards or areas in the OMBC area through a referendum.
- Adopting, and where appropriate, strengthening the declaration of interests procedure and register of interests and all other policies where there could be a perceived or actual conflict of interest/s either for Councillors or Council employees so as to make sure that members do not leave themselves open to (or perceived to be open to) improper influence through the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, or otherwise.”

Councillor Fielding spoke against the amendment.

Councillor Sheldon did not exercise his right of reply.

Councillor Harkness did not exercise his right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT.

On being put to the vote, 8 votes were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT and 45 votes were cast AGAINST with 0 ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

Councillor Roberts spoke against the Motion.

Councillor Sheldon exercised his right of reply.

On being put to the vote, 5 votes were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION and 48 votes were cast AGAINST with 0 ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore LOST.

12

### **OLDHAM'S COVID-19 RESPONSE - UPDATE**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Fielding SECONDED a report which provided an update on how the Council and its partners continued to monitor and manage the impact of COVID-19 in Oldham.

COVID-19 was still circulating across the UK and new cases continued in Oldham every day. The report provided a summary of activity and demonstrated how the Council collectively managed and prevented the spread of COVID-19 across Oldham's communities.

The report detailed the four key themes which were: Test and Trace; Vaccination; Enforcement and Compliance; and Community Engagement and Communications. Test and Trace included local testing door-to-door testing, mobile testing units, care home testing, contact tracing and tracing in schools. With regard to vaccinations, the United Kingdom had become the first country to approve a COVID-19 vaccine and the NHS was currently offering the vaccine to those people most at risk from coronavirus. Oldham was preparing to deliver the programme starting with the most vulnerable segments of the population. Pop-up mass/community vaccination sites would be established in each of the five Primary Care Network areas of the locality

supported by mobile arrangements to ensure equitable access to vaccination.



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Enforcement and compliance included support to businesses, support grants and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The Enforcement Team (Environmental Health, Licensing, Community Safety and Greater Manchester Police colleagues) were working seven days a week visiting premises, responding to complaints, attending gatherings and serving fixed penalty notices.

Community engagement and communications included public health messaging, self-isolation payments, winter grant payments and work was ongoing to ensure mechanisms were in place to support the distribution of vouchers.

Question received from Councillor Sykes:

“I welcomed the recent news that Oldham will soon be one of 67 areas to be the location of mass testing. Mass testing enabled Liverpool to detect asymptomatic carriers of Covid-19 and to move from Tier 3 to 2. I hope that it will start soon and be placed in the hands of our armed forces who have done such a sterling job in Merseyside, rather than incompetent private sector companies.

My question is in two parts, relating to the priority that will be given to certain groups of individuals and the testing timetable. Front line health, care and key workers leading the fight to save lives, alleviate suffering and deliver core services should be an absolute priority group in a mass testing programme, both for moral and practical reasons, but I would like to make a plea for a third category of our residents not be overlooked.

In this pandemic, one of the greatest tragedies has been seeing the forced separation of the residents of our care homes from their loved ones. For the residents of the care homes in our borough who have waited many months to finally meet up with family a visit cannot come soon enough.

According to a recent survey carried out by Age UK, seven out of ten people with a close relative in a care home have not seen them since the start of the pandemic in March; so can I make a plea tonight to the Cabinet Member and ask her to ensure that the relatives of the residents of care homes are also given priority so they can arrange to visit, hopefully by Xmas? And can I also ask her to she can confirm tonight when the mass testing programme will start in Oldham?”

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that the mass testing in Liverpool may have helped reduce the transmission rates but this was not the only factor driving down their infection rates. In Oldham we had been planning our approach to using the same type of tests as used in the Liverpool pilot in a targeted way for those most at risk of getting and transmitting the virus, and those most at risk of experiencing harm from the virus. This included care home staff, residents and visitors.

We were working with the military to plan the set up of testing site and had already started providing training to some of the groups we wished to prioritise, for example schools. We were working hard to ensure that loved ones could visit their relatives in Care Homes prior to Christmas. By 18th December all care homes should have received testing kits to enable them to offer visitor testing. We wanted to make sure that visiting was carried out as safely as possible and had worked with other Councils across Greater Manchester to agree guidance for care homes. This guidance was being shared with care homes this week and training was being offered to support them to undertake testing. We were also offering testing via a central testing site to support care home visiting in homes that were not yet able to offer testing themselves.

Question received from Councillor C Gloster:

“Anecdotal evidence, particularly from the Liverpool mass testing programme, suggests that people, particularly those from deprived backgrounds, are deliberately avoiding taking a Covid test as they cannot afford to not work due to lack of government support.

I would like to ask the Cabinet Member how are we encouraging our vulnerable residents to take a test without the fear of deprivation? And additionally, what are we doing as a local authority doing to support those that have a positive test result and then cannot work?”

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that in Oldham, we had tried to make sure that access to COVID tests was as easy as possible. In addition to our 3 static testing sites we had 2 mobile testing units that moved around the borough every few days to reduce journey times to local testing sites, we also ensured that most of the sites had a walk through access in recognition that many of our residents do not have access to, or drive, a vehicle.

We regularly examined our local data to identify areas with the highest rates of infection, the number of tests being undertaken and the proportion of people testing positive in each ward.

Where testing rates were low or rates of infection were particularly high, we were able to deploy our door step engagement team to help explain COVID restrictions and to offer COVID-19 tests to residents.

To promote the availability of tests and testing sites we published details of schedules for testing at the permanent, as well as mobile sites every week. This was done through a range of channels, including our social media, local ward councillors and district teams. We also promoted the financial support available to people who needed to self-isolate.

In the new year we would be increasing access to testing for people who did not have symptoms. We were keen to learn from Liverpool to ensure that fears about losing income did not act as a disincentive to testing, and would continue to work with local organisations and communities to understand the barriers to testing and try to design the local testing offer in a way that was easy for people to access and reduced these disincentives.



Question received from Councillor Hamblett:

“A recent disturbing report from Public Health England found that people with learning disabilities were up to six times more likely to die from Covid-19 during the first wave of the pandemic, and the death rate for those aged 18 to 34 was THIRTY times higher than the average.

The study found that there were 451 deaths per 100,000 people registered with a learning disability between 21 March and 5 June, but that this was thought to be an underestimate due to gaps in the data. Researchers estimated that the real figure could have been up to 692 per 100,000 – over 6 times the national average.

Can the Cabinet Member please tell us what is being done to support, test and treat Covid-19 patients with learning disabilities, and will Oldham residents with learning disabilities be prioritised in the proposed mass testing programme?”

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that

#### Shielding

- Early in lockdown it was identified that there was some confusion about shielding for people with LD. A protocol for Oldham GPs was developed that outlined requirements for:
  - o Highest risk people with LD and/or autism who need to shield
  - o At risk/Vulnerable people with LD and/or autism who need additional support
- All practices within Oldham CCG received guidance from the Primary Care Team on 27/3/20 on how to identify, from their registered patient list, those patients who had the clinical conditions as set out in the NHS England guidance dated 22/03/2020 defined as at the highest risk of severe morbidity and mortality from coronavirus.

#### Annual Health Checks

- Pre Covid-19 57% of the people on Oldham LD registers were receiving an annual health check, however as anticipated this had been greatly impacted by Covid-19 as patients were unable to go into practices. To address this issue, we had piloted remote health checks.
- We had secured regional funding to develop the role of an Outreach LD RGN who would work with practices to ensure processes were established to book health checks while adhering to any reasonable adjustments as well as performing health checks in the community. The role was in the recruitment process and we anticipated this would greatly increase the uptake of annual health checks by people with a learning disability.
- GM guidance had been shared with preferred model including both virtual and face to face options. Oldham was looking to progress with the model shared by GM due to the following benefits:
  - o This would save GP time and enable more AHCs to be completed



- o Face to face required only if necessary
- o Reduced stress of going into a surgery
- o Reduced the need for people to use public transport
- o Enable people with complex needs and their carers to receive an AHC who previously may not have been able to go into the surgery
- o Increased likelihood of greater uptake if people receive AHCs from their own home in a comfortable environment

#### Testing

The LD Covid-19 testing plan had been worked up reviewing the following cohorts of people:

- Testing for people living alone with low needs not accessing services but registered as a patient with an LD with their GP
- Testing for people living with family with low needs not accessing services but registered as a patient with an LD with their GP
- Testing for people who are registered with the LA who are not receiving services
- Testing for people who receive services from the LA but live at home with family
- Testing for people in supporting accommodation or who have a PA
- Testing for people with complex needs either at home or in supported living

Covid testing, including daily monitoring checks and Covid swabbing approaches, had focussed on supported living settings in the first instance. We were working with colleagues in Public Health and with specific providers to develop a person centred approach to the most appropriate way of testing and consent to testing, which included our response to Track and Trace for those settings. The focus was on supported living for adults with LD and/or autism and how we supported tenants and those supporting them at home with oversight and monitoring of oxygen levels. From recent LeDeR rapid reviews and themes from LeDeR in general relates to pneumonia as a leading cause of death in adults with LD, but the rapid reviews had also shown significant concerns relating to silent hypoxia (no obvious concerns of the usual indicators, e.g. breathlessness, cough, blue skin tone, increased confusion etc). In these instances people had gone to bed appearing well, and died in the night. More work was required to understand the impact of Covid19 on deaths in our LD and autism population which would be picked up through LeDeR and the ADASS work on rapid reviews

#### LD Mortality Reviews (LeDeR)

There was a currently a backlog of LD mortality reviews and this was likely to increase as a result of Covid19. This was due to a number of Covid-related deaths of people with LD, but also because of the practical issues that impeded the reviews.

- The KPIs for LeDeR reviews were as follows:
- For the CCG to have an identified lead
- For the CCG to provide an annual report (complete and presented to LDPB in November)
- For reviews to be completed within 6 months of being reported
- For the learning from the reviews to be distributed and embedded into practice.
- The CCG is exploring options to recruit to a dedicated clinical post that will support with undertaking the reviews as well as embedding the learning from the reviews

Question received from Councillor Al-Hamdani:

“Mental health services in the UK are “overflowing” with patients, with growing numbers struggling to cope with anxiety, psychosis and depression, according to the Royal College of Psychiatrists. New data shows that the number of people needing support and advice because of suicidal thoughts has tripled, with similar trends being seen among those with anxiety disorders. Please can the Cabinet Member tell us what is being done in Oldham to support local people reporting mental illness since the start of the during the current crisis?”

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that the following actions were put in place in response to the Covid19 crisis across the mental health system:

- Established a 24/7 helpline with the Trust initially to support people known to services, which was later expanded to support the people who may be coming through 111 requiring mental health support
- Community hubs had a direct pathway to a Tameside Oldham & Glossop Mind practitioner where there were identified mental health or wellbeing needs
- Crisis Safe Haven at Royal Oldham Hospital was repurposed as a ‘MH A&E’ to reduce numbers of people attending ED with updated urgent and crisis pathway at the start of the pandemic. Last month the Safe Haven had been reinstated as originally intended as support for people following A&E assessment and/or for people under care coordination with Community Mental Health Teams.
- Risk stratification process undertaken for patients across teams to identify where face to face contacts still required. Face to face contact with patients had continued throughout where necessary.
- Coordinated work to overcome barriers to discharge and reduce Delayed Transfers of Care on adult and older adult acute wards – the number of MH DTOCs had stayed at a minimum
- Developed dedicated inpatient Covid pods to ensure compliance with IPC guidance
- Developed and implemented updated Covid pathways for Memory Assessment, IAPT, Safe Haven/Home Treatment and Liaison MH in hospital teams

- Provided a bespoke care home staff support offer through the helpline and Care Home Liaison Team (now working with the STICH team)
- Rolled out Silver Cloud online therapy universal support offer for Oldham population, with targeted modules available for health and social care front line workers
- Established a weekly Mental Health System Support call including all partners across CCG, Council, Public Health, primary care, providers and third/voluntary sector
- Outlined the Oldham bereavement support offer from immediate support to longer-term counselling offer provided by Healthy Minds
- Progressing with development of the 'Dementia Hub' which had been planned in response to changing carer support needs since Covid, providing much needed respite to carers and therapeutic/social opportunities for people with dementia. The service would run initially from a community centre and follow council approved guidance for day services to ensure safe delivery
- Collaboration across Clinical Psychologist, Senior Educational Psychologist, Specialist MH School Advisor and Emotional Wellbeing Team had worked together to support schools during lockdown and recovery, and acted on the concerns and anxieties young people shared about the safe return to school/college.
- Healthy Young Minds staff were approved to support the acute paediatric ward to assess children admitted with emotional wellbeing symptoms and to support early discharge planning, as well as offer additional 7 day follow up support to 16-17 year olds who had either been admitted or referred through the MH Liaison team in A&E
- Over the next few months we would be implementing winter pressure MH schemes – for Oldham we had submitted a proposal for additional mental health nursing support in Butler Green and Medlock Court

Question received from Councillor Murphy:

“In the Middle of November, it was reported that payments made against fixed penalty notices issued under coronavirus laws have yet to reach local authorities. Apparently, an organisation called Acro, the criminal records office, has been processing the fines given by English and Welsh police forces and the money remains in an Acro bank account, rather than being disbursed. Acro told the national press that the money had not yet gone anywhere as it was still trying to locate payment details of local authorities. I am assuming that in the month that has passed this authority has been in touch with Acro to ensure they have the correct details to ensure this unsatisfactory situation can be resolved.

If this is so could the Cabinet member please tell me whether this Council has now received the money it is owed from Acro, and how much this is? Alternately if this is not so can the Cabinet Member tell me how much is owing and what action we are taking to get paid?”

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that the Council had contacted Acro and supplied the correct details to enable payment against fixed penalty notices issued by the police under coronavirus laws. An initial remittance had been received from Acro and a payment of £610 had been received by the Council. This payment covered fixed penalty notices issued in May and June for 15 offences recorded in April and May. Information for later penalty notices had been requested.

The payments only related to fixed penalty notices issued by the police. Fixed penalty notices issued by Council officers were processed direct by the Council and were not affected by the arrangements with Acro.

Question received from Councillor H Gloster:

“The NHS is establishing specialist units to treat “long Covid” patients with persistent symptoms such as breathlessness, chronic fatigue, brain fog, anxiety and stress. Apparently up to 500,000 people in Britain are living with the long-term effects. I understand that three of these units or mini- hospitals will be in the North West of England. Does the Cabinet Member know where these will be located?”

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that the precise location(s) of these specialist facilities for ‘long Covid’ was yet to be determined. Work was currently taking place to develop and agree a specification. It was the intention of the Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership that, following agreement on the specifications and the associated scoping exercise, a decision would be made with regard to the location prior to Christmas by the appropriate Greater Manchester Board.

Question received from Councillor Harkness:

“In early November, economist Douglas McWilliams, founder of the Centre for Economics and Business Research, warned that the four-week lockdown in England would wipe £1.8bn off the value of the economy for every day it lasts.

Can the Cabinet Member please tell me if there is an estimate of the loss to the Oldham economy every day during Lockdown, and if so, what this is?”

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that unfortunately, the Government did not measure economic gains or losses at a local authority level. It is not possible to provide a direct response to the question.

However, it was clear that the economic impact has been significant in Oldham. Unemployment and Youth Unemployment levels increased by 101% and 132% respectively.

Between 55 - 62% of businesses had reported reduced sales over the last two months across all sectors, however this was significantly higher for the Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism sector and Creative and Cultural industries which had seen 76%



of businesses declaring decreased sales persistently for the last 2 months.

Businesses on average reported that they had less than 6 months sustainability dropped from 23.5% in early September to 9% at the end of November, however for Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism were reporting around 40% declaring less than 6 months of sustainability (with cash flow being a key problem for 49%).

The Council had focussed effort on prioritising grant support providing £51.974 million of grant support alongside engagement with businesses to ensure that they were aware of business support programmes delivered by the Growth Company.

Question received from Councillor Williamson:

“In early November, around 12 Covid-19 deaths per day were reported to be happening at the Pennine Acute hospitals, which includes the Royal Oldham Hospital. This is the highest number of daily deaths of any hospital trust and over the preceding month the number was 197 of the 600 Covid-19 deaths in Greater Manchester. The data could indicate the trust has struggled to cope with ‘probable healthcare-associated infections’, which means an outbreak or outbreaks of Covid-19 within the trust’s hospitals.

Can the Cabinet Member please tell us what steps are being taken to control and prevent further outbreaks at our hospital in the future?”

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that the Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust did have the highest mortality for COVID-19 across Greater Manchester. The mortality figures detailed in the question represented the total number of deaths in the 5 Hospitals which constituted the Trust. These deaths were generally evenly distributed between NMGH, FGH/RI and TROH. However, there was no evidence to indicate this was being driven by in-hospital nosocomial transmission of COVID-19. It should be referenced though that at the peak of activity PAT had 424 patients with COVID-19 in hospital indicating there were approximately 40% more patients at this time in hospital with COVID-19 compared with comparable size organisations in GM. Considering the Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust had the highest levels of COVID-19 admissions during the second wave of the pandemic (40% more COVID admissions than the second highest Trust with Covid admission activity in Greater Manchester) there was a likely correlation with this activity and the reported increased mortality rate.

SitRep data used by NHS England and NHS Improvement on their daily infection dashboard to identify any possible in-hospital transmissions of COVID-19 in the in-patient setting did not evidence special cause variation at the Royal Oldham Hospital nor at the Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

It was acknowledged there was a spike in nosocomial transmission at the beginning of the second wave (end of October- mid November) but this was observed across all Trusts within Greater Manchester at similar levels.

Work has been ongoing across the NCA to prevent nosocomial infections. There had been an Infection Prevention Control Collaborative running across the NCA which had now become an IPC cell.

The cell had used The Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) report “COVID-19 transmission in hospitals: management of the risk – a prospective safety investigation” to form a hierarchy of priorities for the care organisation to work through. This group met three times a week and had enjoyed participation of NHSI/E who attended to observe and provide input and guidance when necessary.

Nosocomial infections for Oldham for w/c 26th October totalled 27 the height of the COVID19 admissions peak compared to 6 for w/c 30th November a reduction of some 78%.

Question received from Councillor Phythian:

“I have recently received enquiries from a ward constituent who works for the DWP benefits office on Union Street in the Town Centre.

The enquiry was to do with free parking for key workers in the Town Centre during the continuing pandemic. In light of the Government’s pay freeze for public service workers does the council have any plans to introduce such a scheme?”

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Covid-19 Response responded that in order to help support Oldham’s key workers - free parking was introduced on all Council car parks in the town centre at the start of the March lockdown period. While this had been reviewed periodically with the various changes to tiered restrictions further lockdown periods, the Council decided to retain the free parking arrangement for keyworkers – and this remained in place to this day.

Anyone designated as a keyworker, supporting communities in Oldham had the privilege to park for free on Tommyfield market car park, subject to displaying the correct Government issue key worker permit on their dashboard.

In the event that a Penalty Charge Notices was issued by mistake to a key worker, it would be cancelled once evidence of keyworker status had been confirmed and verified.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The update on Oldham’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic be noted.
2. The questions and responses provided be noted.

13

**UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL**

Councillor Fielding MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED a report of the Director of Legal Services which informed members of actions taken following previous Council meetings and provided feedback on issues raised at those meetings.

**RESOLVED** that the actions regarding motions and issues from previous Council meetings be noted.

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE

Councillor Moores MOVED and Councillor Mushtaq SECONDED an update on the recent Ofsted Focused Visit and progress related to Children's Social Care improvement plans.



The report summarised the following:

- The Children and Young People Services response to Covid-19 was found to be good because the Team Oldham response had been good. It was a whole system judgement.
- Good progress had been made on the improvement journey and the response to Covid-19 had accelerated progress and not delayed it.
- The 2020 Self-Assessment of the service submitted to Ofsted was well founded – the priorities were the right ones and there were no surprises in the findings.
- The Ofsted Inspection Framework for the visit was an exhausting and intensive 3-week programme and had put the service under extreme pressure.
- The Council should not be complacent and there was still much to do, but the Council should assert the strong performance in Greater Manchester and the North West and be proud of the achievements.

Council were reminded that in November 2018, an investment of £12m had been approved across three years to strengthen the management across Children's Social Care and provide the required number of social work practitioners needed to provide a good service as part of a new operating model.

Council were informed of the Ofsted Focused Visit which had been conducted in October 2020. The visit focused on three key areas: Help and Protection; Children in Care and Care Leavers; and Impact of Leaders. The majority of findings were overwhelmingly positive and no immediate priority actions were identified.

**RESOLVED** that the update on Children's Services and progress to date be noted.

## TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW REPORT 2020/21

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Fielding SECONDED a report of the Director of Finance which advised on the performance of the Treasury Management Function of the Council for the first half of 2020/21 and provided a comparison of performance against the 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators.

The Council was 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 2017). The report set out the key Treasury Management issues for members information and review and outlined the following:

- An economic update for the first six months of 2020/21;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- The Council's capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators;
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2020/21;
- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2020/21;
- Why there had been no debt rescheduling undertaken during 2020/21; and
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2020/21.

The mid-year 2020/21 treasury management position was scrutinised by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 and was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Both the Audit Committee and Cabinet were content to commend mid-year review to Council for approval.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in FAVOUR of the recommendations.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The Treasury Management activity for the first half of the financial year 2020/21 and the projected outturn position be approved.
2. The Amendments to both Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for external debt as set out in the table at Section 2.4.5 of the report be approved.
3. The Amendments to the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) as set out in the table at Section 2.4.5 be approved.

16

**2019/20 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Fielding SECONDED a report of the Director of Finance which advised Council of the recently approved 2019/20 audited Statement of Accounts and the External Auditor (Mazars LLP) Audit Completion Report (ACR) and Annual Audit Letter.

The report presented the Council's audited Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2019/20 as considered by the Audit Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020. Delegated authority was given to the Vice Chair of the Audit Committee after consultation with the Director of Finance to approve the accounts pending the resolution of two outstanding queries. The first was assurance with regard to the audit of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund (GMPF) and the second, the resolution of an outstanding item related to the Council's investment in the Manchester Airport Holdings Limited. The accounts were subsequently approved on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020, with only one change to the Statement of Accounts presented and accepted at the Audit Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020, being additional wording required on the assurances of asset

valuations highlighted as a result of the conclusion of the GMPF audit.



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Council

The report highlighted:

- The overall revenue outturn position for 2019/20 was a surplus of £0.270m. This was an increase on the favourable variance of £0.065m projected at month 9 that was reported to Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.
- The year-end variances that were attributable to each Portfolio.
- Schools balances at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 at £5.487m but offset by the deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) of £4.916m leaving a net balance of £0.571m held within Other Earmarked Reserves.
- The final Housing Revenue Account (HRA) balance was £21.796m.
- The balance on the Collection Fund was a surplus of £3.295m.
- The small reduction in revenue account earmarked reserves of £1.263m to a level of £79.360m, a decrease in other earmarked reserves of £4.431m to a level of £8.504m and an increase in the General Fund balance of £0.270m to £15.110m, reflective of the revenue outturn position.
- Expenditure on the Council's capital programme for 2019/20 was £54.383m which was an increase on the month 9 forecast expenditure of £52.497m. The increase in expenditure required funding allocated to future years to be re-profiled to fully finance the Capital Programme in 2019/20.
- Capital Receipts in year totalled £9.914m, all of which were used to finance the Capital Programme in year.
- The significant items in each of the primary financial statements.
- The preparation of the Group Accounts incorporating the Council's two wholly owned companies – the Unity Partnership Ltd. And MioCare Community Interest Company.
- The performance of the Finance Team in closing the accounts.

The presentation of the audited Statement of Accounts provided Council with the opportunity to review the Council's year-end financial position (following completion of the audit by the Council's External Auditors, Mazars LLP). The Statement of Accounts was also presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

**RESOLVED** that Authority's final accounts position for 2019/20, the Statement of Accounts and the Audit Completion Report be noted.



Councillor Fielding MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED a report of the Director of Legal Services which sought approval for the nomination of Steve Hill MBE to receive the Council's Civic Appreciation Award.



The nomination was in recognition of Mr. Hill's significant voluntary contribution and dedication to the local community and borough of Oldham.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in FAVOUR of the recommendations.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The nomination of Steve Hill to receive the Civic Appreciation Award be agreed.
2. The ceremony for the award to take place prior to the Council meeting to be held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

18

**MUNICIPAL DIARY 2021/22**

Councillor Fielding MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED a report of the Director of Legal Services which sought approval of the draft Calendar of Meetings for the 2021/2022 Municipal Year.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in FAVOUR of the recommendations.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The Council's Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
2. Approval of any outstanding dates be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 10.35 pm