

Present: The Mayor – Councillor Garry (in the Chair)

Councillors Ahmad, Akhtar, Al-Hamdani, Ali, Arnott, Ball, Barnes, M Bashforth, Birch, Brownridge, Byrne, Chadderton, Cosgrove, Dean, C. Gloster, H. Gloster, Goodwin, Hamblett, Harrison, Hindle, Hobin, Hulme, F Hussain, S Hussain, Ibrahim, Jabbar, Kenyon, Lancaster, McLaren, McManus, Moores, Munroe, Murphy, Mushtaq, Nasheen, C. Phythian, K Phythian, Rea, Roberts, Salamat, Sharp, Sheldon, Shuttleworth, Surjan, Sykes, Taylor, Wilkinson, Williamson, Williams and Woodvine

1 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alyas, Azad, S. Bashforth, Chauhan, Iqbal, Islam, Marland and Quigg.

2 **GREATER MANCHESTER POLICING PLAN UPDATE**

The Mayor welcomed Chief Superintendent Chris Bowen to the meeting, who addressed Members, updating Council on the Greater Manchester Policing Plan, further to his last attendance at Council (on 3rd November 2021, minute 6).

He reminded Council that Greater Manchester Police (GMP) had previously made five promises to the people of Greater Manchester, that were outlined in November 2021, namely: -

1. To respond to incidents and emergencies
2. To investigate and solve crime
3. To prevent, reduce crime, reduce harm and reduce anti-social behaviour
4. To deliver outstanding service
5. To build back public trust and confidence

Chief Superintendent Bowen added that statistically GMP was the most improved police force in the country. GMP was in the top 10% of forces for answering and reacting to 999 calls and their response rates to 101 calls were also good. The force was getting to over 85% of Grade 1 emergency calls within the required 15 minutes.

In Oldham arrests had risen by 51% and there had been significant progress made in the battle against domestic violence. Correspondingly there has been no increase in the numbers of complaints made against GMP, or its officers by members of the public.

Councillor Chadderton asked about progress relating to Operation Sherwood, further to the special meeting of the Council held on 27th June 2022. Chief Superintendent Bowen said that he could not comment on an ongoing investigation in detail.

Councillor C Phythian asked about plans that were in place to counter speeding motorists, which was an issue of particular concern in the Borough's Royton North ward. Chief

Superintendent Bowen replied that countering speeding traffic was a GMP priority and plans were in place to bring all traffic enforcement under one department, which would help to ensure more effective enforcement.

Councillor Sykes asked when the public would start to feel the benefits and the difference from the implementation of the Greater Manchester policing priorities and sought clarification on DBS checks. Chief Superintendent Bowen replied that Greater Manchester police were recruiting 120 new police officers every five weeks and the Oldham division would, receive a pro-rata number of new officers with each intake. Oldham was expected to receive an additional seven officers, in January 2023, as part of the pro-rat allocation. Regarding DBS checks Chief Superintendent Bowen undertook to write to the Council with an update.

Councillor Al-Hamdani asked if GMP were working towards each Ward having a 'named officer' which was a stated commitment of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Mayor. Chief Superintendent Bowen confirmed that there were two Wards in the Borough that were currently without a named officer and that, from March 2023, neighbourhood policing should be at full strength in the Borough. The secondment of Neighbourhood Officers would continue in the event of resourcing pressures.

Councillor Sheldon referred to numerous examples of dangerous driving occurring in Saddleworth and the dangers that such negligent activity posed to members of the public. He therefore asked if GMP were dealing adequately with dangerous and speeding drivers and whether the police had enough resources to tackle the problem? Chief Superintendent Bowen replied that addressing the issue of speeding and dangerous drivers was a priority for GMP and he outlined several measures that the force was taking to address this issue including the use of mobile speed cameras.

Councillor Arnott referred to an incident in 2021 when ex-Councillor Shah's motor vehicle was fire-bombed. Chief Superintendent Bowen replied that it would not be appropriate to comment on a live investigation.

Councillor Hobin asked about rotas for Police Constables and PCSOs. Chief Superintendent Bowen commented that these rotas are being combined to avoid over or under staffing as part of the Neighbourhood Policing review.

Councillor Rea referred to the 'CSE helpline that had been established and whether it had been of any assistance to GMP in their investigations. Chief Superintendent Bowen did not provide exact figures in relation to the uptake of the helpline.

The Mayor thanked Chief Superintendent Bowen for his attendance.

3

TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 2ND NOVEMBER 2022 BE SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of Council, held on 2nd November 2022, be approved as a correct record.

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

Members of the Council declared interest as follows:

- a. Councillor Lancaster declared a pecuniary interest by virtue of his employment with the Royal British Legion, insofar as it affected the agenda item 11 (Notice of Opposition Business – Motion 1, entitled: ‘Supporting our Armed Forces Community’).
- b. Councillor Arnott declared a non-registerable interest by virtue of his receipt of an occupational pension in respect of his service with the Armed Forces, insofar as it affected the agenda item 11 (Notice of Opposition Business – Motion 1, entitled: ‘Supporting our Armed Forces Community’).
- c. Councillor Birch declared an other registerable interest in agenda item 9c (Questions on Cabinet Minutes – 17th October 2022) insofar as they referred to Positive Steps an organisation of which she was a Trustee.
- d. Councillor Roberts declared an other registerable interest in agenda item 9c (Questions on Cabinet Minutes – 17th October 2022) insofar as they referred to Positive Steps an organisation of which she was a Trustee.
- e. Councillor Hamblett declared an other registerable interest in agenda item 9c (Questions on Cabinet Minutes – 17th October 2022) insofar as they referred to Positive Steps an organisation of which he was a Trustee.

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

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

TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

The Mayor asked Members to note that Hannah Roberts was elected as a Member for the Hollinwood Ward, following the by-election that was held on Thursday, 17th November 2022. The Mayor permitted Councillor Chadderton, Leader of the Council, to address the meeting. Councillor Chadderton referred to the recent sad news from Solihull, West Midlands where three young boys had tragically died in an accident and she also issued a statement in relation to Strep A, a winter virus that has resulted in fatalities across the country and which was adding to the pressures that were currently faced by the NHS. The Mayor informed Council that a former Member and Chairman of Chadderton Urban District Council, William (Bill) Fish has sadly passed away. Bill served as an Oldham Metropolitan Borough Councillor for Chadderton South from 1974 - 1978. Council observed a minute’s silence in his memory.

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

There were no petitions received to be noted.

The Youth Council PROPOSED the following MOTION:

Green Roofs and Walls

‘Over the past 3 years, young people have told us that the environment is one of the biggest issues that they feel needs to be dealt with. In make your mark, since 2018, of the 29,792 votes cast, nearly a quarter have been for environmental issues. In October of this year we attended the Greater Manchester Green Summit, opened by our very own Youth Mayor, at the Lowry. This event highlighted the urgency and importance presented to us by the climate crisis. Speakers talked about the levels of pollution and C O 2 in Greater Manchester, how we have already used most of our carbon budget and how we were falling behind the targets set. Our Youth Councillors also attended the Net Zero Conference where lecturers from Salford University and the Royal Horticultural Society, demonstrated how we can use green, blue and brown roofs, as well as living walls to help the environment. With the information from both these events, we felt that we should bring this to your attention so Oldham can take action.

So what is a green roof? Simply, it is the roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and growing medium planted over a waterproof barrier. A variety of this type of roof is the brown roof, which is where the plants self-seed from windblown and bird lime seed dispersal. A blue roof is quite simply a roof designed for the retention of rainwater and can be combined with green or brown roofs so that the captured water can irrigate the plants. Finally, if we take a green roof, turn it vertically and put it on the side of a building then it becomes a living wall.

We know that the installation of these types of roofs and living walls can be as much as 75% more expensive than conventional roof and wall types, especially if the roof or wall is being retro fitted. However, in Germany where green roofs are common, a green roof can be expected to experience double or even triple the life of a standard roof, saving money in the future. Savings also come from the reduction in operational and maintenance costs. The ‘Investing in green roofs for climate adaptation’ report by the ignition project, showed this measure comprises of low operational costs and reduction in bills. It showed a 13% saving in wastewater charges and savings of 5% on energy costs for apartments in Salford. That same report showed that a brown roof on the Unicorn Grocery, Manchester, had an 18% saving on energy costs and a maintenance saving of 20%.

Use of green, brown and blue roofs is also fundamentally a perfect idea for a business’s reputation. The report asserted that by being more environmental conscious maintained or even increased the reputation of a business. This reputation also helped uplift the property and rental costs of their buildings. But this motion is not about saving money it is about saving our planet. As we mentioned earlier, we are not meeting our targets in Greater Manchester, and we feel this intervention will help with that, while making our town a nicer, cleaner, and greener place to live and work.

The 'Investing in a Green Greater Manchester report' showed that for every square metre of a green roof or living wall it produces 1.7Kg of Oxygen per year while other studies have shown that living walls and roofs could capture 84g of carbon in the atmosphere. The report also showed that buildings with a green roof, on average, use 6.7% less energy to heat or cool the building and reduce noise pollution by up to 11db. A living wall on the other hand can reduce energy use by 8%, remove 18-35% of CO₂ from surrounding areas and remove 200g of air born particles every year for every square metre. With this in mind, green roofs and living walls are ideally placed in high traffic, busy urban areas such as town centres.

With the number of hills in Oldham, flooding is perhaps not a major issue but with the amount of rain we have our drainage system must be under a lot of strain. With interventions such as living walls and roofs the amount of water runoff is significantly reduced, with the vegetation and substrate retaining up to 75% of water that is dropped on to it. This would help ease the pressure on our drainage and reduce the need for water treatment companies to process it. Again, this would indirectly mean less energy is consumed.

As well as helping the environment having greenery in built-up areas also helps with residents' mental health. It's well known that endorphin levels increase when you feel calmer within nature. Greenery helps lower stress levels and generate lots of positive emotions. In placing Green Roofs and Green walls in place of brick and concrete it will impact on Oldham residents' wellbeing and maybe even entice them to visit these places more often.

We have thought about where these roofs and walls could be placed. The new development of a green space in Oldham town centre would be an ideal start. Any businesses or flats built in this space could be designed with these specialist roofs and walls already fitted, saving on having to add them later.

However, we also felt that roofs and living walls would be ideal retro fittings for buildings in parks, such as cafes, so that they fit better into the natural environment already there. Schools and colleges could be another space that have living walls which will not only reduce costs for already stretched budgets but will help teach young people about caring for the environment. Our favourite idea though is to add green or brown roofs and living walls to public transport stops and stations. These could be seeded with bee friendly plants and of course we could all call them...

...BUZZ Stops.

When we talk colleagues from other youth councils, through the GMYCA, Oldham always appears to be at the forefront of eco innovation. We are proud to discuss schemes such as Northern roots, how we are looking to install solar farms or how far our thinking outside the box is when we think to flood old mine shafts to heat local businesses. When we have looked at plans and development of the town centre and when we talk with Council officers there is no mention of living roofs and walls. We don't believe that they have been discounted but perhaps overlooked.

We therefore propose that this Council resolves to:

- a. Investigate the feasibility of installing green roofs and living walls on buildings in Oldham;
- b. Consider supporting businesses and schools that wish to install green roofs and walls and;
- c. That Green Roofs and Walls are considered as part of the Council's approach to climate change adaptation and resilience.'

Councillor Jabbar spoke in support of the Motion

Councillor Munroe spoke in support of the Motion

Councillor H. Gloster spoke in support of the Motion

Councillor Munroe MOVED and Councillor H. Gloster

SECONDED the MOTION as presented by the Youth Council.

RESOLVED:

1. The Executive Director for Place and Economic Growth be requested to investigate the feasibility of installing green roofs and living walls on buildings in Oldham.
2. That the Council agrees to support businesses and schools that wish to install green roofs and walls.
3. That Green Roofs and Walls be considered as part of the Council's approach to climate change adaptation and resilience.

9

QUESTIONS TIME

10

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Question submitted by Andy Powell

A flagpole was recently installed and uninstalled at Dogford Park, Royton at a cost of over £2,000 under the Local Improvement Fund. A response to an FOI request states that the flagpole was requested by one or more councillors who appear to have circumvented the proper process and requested the flagpole even though it was not on the approved expenditure.

1. which councillor(s) requested and/or instigated this use of Royton tax payers money without authorisation?
2. what action has been taken in respect of those involved?
3. will the people of Royton get chance to recoup some on this 2k for much needed local improvements?
4. what has been put in place to stop it happening again?

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, replied that earlier this year a number of concerns were raised with the council, during a weekend of extremely high winds, about the safety of a flagpole which had been recently erected at Dogford Park. On investigating these concerns, it became clear that the flagpole had been installed, by council officers, outside of the proper processes and approvals for the local investment fund and, as a result, no risk assessment or safety assessment could be found in relation to the installation.

As a result, the decision was made to remove the pole as soon as possible while the circumstances and process of its

installation could be discovered. The pole was stored for reuse once a suitable local site could be identified.

The council staff involved in the purchase and installation have been reminded about the established processes for approval of Local Improvement Fund bids and our guidelines around approvals have been reviewed to try to avoid any further issues of this kind.

Happily, the pole has now found a fitting new home alongside the War Memorial Royton Park where it can be enjoyed by the park's many visitors.

2. Question submitted by Ben Ingham

I am writing to raise a concern around the parking on Lea View in Royton. The road is now effectively single carriage at times right up to the junction with Middleton Road, this coupled with the increase in traffic seemingly using this route as a cut through to Broadway is beginning to cause issue. Additionally, there is a lack of visibility, coupled with the reduction in road space, as you turn onto Middleton Road causes potentially hazardous situations. Could the council look into restrictions on parking around the junctions to ease this?

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, replied: thank you for your question. We are aware that parking is problematic in many places across the borough, particularly in densely populated residential areas, where households own more than one vehicle and do not have off street parking provisions.

We are aware of the issues on Lea View, where parking narrows the available road width forcing motorists to operate a 'give and take' system around the parked vehicles.

The introduction of parking restrictions and yellow lines requires a legal Traffic Regulation order, which is subject to public consultation. As the some of the parking relates to residential vehicles, it is a challenge to balance where alternative parking locations would be located.

We are happy to investigate options to relief the parking concerns but given the low traffic volumes and potential for residents to object to the parking restrictions, we will need to review other options to help the local community.

3. Question submitted by Shaheen Akhtar

In September Andrew Clowes, the Head, Teacher at Hey with Zion wrote an article asking 'Where do I cut?' as his budget has to stretch to deal with rising prices, unfunded staff pay rises and the energy crisis. He said that his staff also had to cope with the rising cost of living and many of the families of his pupils were finding it hard to make ends meet. He wrote a long list of things the school already does to help and pointed out there is nothing left to cut to be able to make up for underfunding of schools. He did suggest that schools be given the money to pay for catch up tutoring rather than a poor value for money national programme and wondered what the new Secretary of State for Education would have to offer. He was right to suggest that there might be a few – Kit Malthouse has now been followed by Gillian Keegan. Does the Cabinet Member for Education have any information

about what this minister is doing to plug the funding gap in schools and to help Head Teachers like Mr Clowes balance the books for their schools and continue to provide good quality education for Oldham children? What does the November Statement have to offer Oldham Schools?



Councillor Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, replied that the Council has set its funding formula for schools for 2023/24, based on initial funding notified earlier this year. This formula determines the funding allocations to be received by individual schools. The Council expects to receive final Dedicated Schools Grant funding notifications around 21st December and this is likely to increase the grant available and therefore increase the funding for schools.

However, in addition to already notified funding, on 17th November 2022, the Autumn Statement was issued and this included an announcement that core schools budgets in England will receive an additional £2.3 billion of funding in 2023/24 and £2.3 billion in 2024/25. Clearly this is good news and will mean more funding for schools in Oldham. The detailed impact of this new money cannot thus far be determined and will only be available when the Dedicated Schools Grant funding information is received, which as previously indicated, is likely to be around 21st December.

The total funding increase and actual impact for individual schools can only be determined once all the detailed funding notifications have been received.

4. Question submitted by David Barker

As a resident who often travels on the Metrolink through the town centre in the evening, it is an all too frequent occurrence to have a tram brought to a halt on Union Street by a car stopped in the road obstructing the route of the tram.

With a high cluster of take away units on Union Street and George Street, and limited parking available, drivers using those premises often take to mounting kerbs or stopping in the middle of the road, completely ignoring road markings such as double yellow lines, and parking in an obstructive and often dangerous manner.

Part of the problem seems to be a lack of patrolling by either police or traffic wardens, which effectively encourages irresponsible and illegal parking with drivers confident they will not be held to account.

This a problem every day of the week and routinely causes problem for tram drivers and passengers travelling through the town centre. In fact, Councillors only need to take a short walk after this meeting to see the problem for themselves first-hand. Given that this has been a recurring problem for years, is the council able to come up with an effective solution to deal with this issue and make a major road in the town centre useable for public transport and pedestrians all hours of the day?

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods replied, thank you for your question. We saw the parking problems on Union Street increase dramatically during the

Covid-19 pandemic and it has become worse following the growth in hot food and take away home delivery services. Parking Enforcement Officers patrol the route everyday but the drivers often tend to move the vehicles when they see the patrols approaching only to return later when they have left the area.

We are looking at options to change the nature of the town centre on Union Street to restrict the levels of parking currently being observed. We are exploring funding options for these works.

We are also aware that part of the issue is the number of unregistered vehicles being used for these delivery services – as parking tickets have been issued, but they do not get paid and some now have considerable debt without a registered owner or address on the national DVLA system. This issue has been escalated to the Safer Roads Partnership at a Greater Manchester level and to Greater Manchester Police as these issues are also being seen at a national level, and where possible, these vehicles are being removed from the road.

5. Question submitted by Connor Green

What preparations are Oldham Council making to deal with possible energy blackouts this winter? The Government has been 'war gaming' to find out how the country would deal with energy blackouts of up to a week this winter. Has the Government issued any guidance on how Oldham Council should keep services going for the most vulnerable or offered any money to help: e.g., care homes or children's homes? I agree with Debbie Abrahams MP that 'we mustn't forget that it was the Tories who have, over the last twelve years, cut investment in energy efficiency, stopped the construction of onshore wind farms, and closed gas storage facilities, meaning that we have lower levels of stored gas.' But given that we seem to be in a precarious position, what reassurance can the Council give about help if blackouts do happen?

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon, replied that the Council had recently received some guidance from our energy suppliers including from the National Grid, who are advising that they are no longer anticipating interruptions to energy supplies.

However, we are still planning support programmes in case we do see supply issues this winter – worst case scenario is when electricity supplies across the UK would be intermittently turned off in a "managed and controlled manner".

If this does occur – we are reviewing 'vulnerable sites' and registering them via Electricity Supply Emergency Code for Protected Site Status, which essentially provides priority energy to registered sites to allow services to continue. Beyond that we are also reviewing provisions for emergency generators to be commissioned.

Finally, we continue to work with the Greater Manchester Resilience team to review key sites and services to ensure the Council can respond to a power outage should it occur.

6. Question submitted by Azad Hussain

Oldham East MP Debbie Abrahams is the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Action Group (APPG) on dementia which has just published a report 'Workforce Matters: putting people with dementia at the heart of care'. Workforce Matters has been shaped by the voices of nearly 2,000 people affected by dementia through an APPG survey, as well as oral and written evidence. The goal was to discover how the social care workforce can enable people affected by dementia to live the lives they want. The main recommendation of the report is for the Government to bring forward a People Plan for social care that's centred around building a workforce that supports people with dementia to live with meaning, purpose, and connection. Other recommendations include more government support for local councils to commission more services to help people with dementia. Can the Cabinet Member for Adult & Social Care tell us what say people with dementia have in how Oldham's services are designed and delivered and ask Council Officers to read and consider the APPG report to see how it might help us to deliver better services?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, replied that a dementia strategy is in place in Oldham that was developed by engaging with all stakeholders in dementia services in both health and social care. People with dementia and their carers were at the centre of this engagement and were represented throughout. We wanted more representation of people from BAME communities and developed the role of a BAME Link Worker for dementia. The link worker accessed BAME communities and a whole section of the strategy relates to BAME access to services. Our link worker has worked with memory assessment services to ensure practice is culturally appropriate for patients and information / documents have been translated into several languages.

From findings within the strategy, we have re-shaped/developed several services and people with lived experience have been at the heart of development including our latest service, a dementia hub in Dr Kershaw's hospice. People with lived experience were present from the start in the planning group and were clear about what they wanted and were key in the design in the service. This is a good model of partnership working between all dementia service providers and people who use services in Oldham.

We work closely with Springboard (peer support group for people with dementia and their carers) who regularly attend Oldham's Dementia Partnership Board and support us to develop person centred services.

Oldham were a key player in the development of the Digital Dementia Pathway which was developed by Dementia United. Oldham were part of GM wide engagement which reached over 300 people with lived experience and their views were embedded into the pathway standards and design.

This pathway supports people with dementia to live with meaning and purpose by giving information on services and groups they can access in their area. We also support living with purpose by the development of the dementia LGBT+ group to address issues related to people from the LGBT+ community

and a physical health trainer with Age UK Oldham to advise on diet and to plan exercise such as walking, exercise classes and group sessions as we know physical health and good diet slows the onset of dementia.

We continue to work towards meeting strategic objectives placing people with lived experience at the centre of development work to co-produce service design and operation. We are aware of the All-Party Parliamentary Action Group Report on Dementia and the findings will be considered in dementia service development.

7. Question submitted by Josh Charters

In the Borough's St. James Ward there has been a lot of antisocial behaviour and crime over the past few months, with people riding illegal dirt bikes at all hours in Derker and Sholver and cars being stolen regularly in Sholver. Is the council working with GMP to address this and how can we see what's been done?

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, replied that the use of off-road bikes and vehicle crime is a concern for us all, both in Sholver and Derker and across the borough.

Unfortunately, the specialist off-road bikes team is a very small force-wide resource which is in significant demand. This is a very dangerous activity and many riders do not wear headgear – this restricts the opportunities for pursuit and enforcement at the time, even by the specialist team.

Resolution of this issue requires a much wider long-term problem-solving approach and Council colleagues from across a variety of services are working with GMP's Neighbourhood Policing Teams and the new Neighbourhood Prevention Hub to address this as a key priority. It remains important that reports are made to GMP, with as much detail being provided as possible, such as vehicle details and registration numbers.

There are a number of legal powers which can be used, not just against those riding the bikes, but against those involved in the storage and transportation of them, due to the associated nuisance they cause and services will be working together to explore all options and opportunities. Intelligence regarding where vehicles are being stored and the vehicles which bring off-road bikes to a site is key to identifying the individuals involved and the potential seizure of the bikes, using the available legislation.

There is a robust response to serious acquisitive crime, which includes the theft of vehicles and this is also a local priority. Community Safety Services are working with the Neighbourhood Crime Team to act, including making applications for Criminal Behaviour Orders, against those identified as responsible for car thefts.

Community Safety Services is working with other partners in the District and will use all the powers available to tackle these types of behaviours. For example, they will share information and evidence with housing providers to enable tenancy enforcement action to be taken too, where it is appropriate to do so.

8. Question submitted by Paul Scoltock

I live in Derker and rely on the bus service to travel into Manchester. I used to be able to get the regular 83 Service to travel into Manchester in the morning, but now I must get a frequently delayed bus into Oldham and either change buses or get a tram to get there now. The 83 service only runs to Manchester from Sholver in the evening now. Can the Council liaise with TGFM and the operators to ensure that buses are running regularly from Sholver to ensure that residents are not cut off from the rest of the Town and City Region?

Councillor Chadderton, Leader of the Council, replied that Oldham Council is in regular contact with Transport for Greater Manchester regarding bus services in Oldham and the performance of them.

The 82 service (daytime link to Oldham) and 83 service (evening link to Oldham & Manchester) are both provided by First Manchester. While TfGM have no direct control over these services, we've asked that the feedback relating to these services is raised at the next performance review meeting with the provider.

TfGM actively encourage residents and councillors to raise specific issues (on any service) via customer.relations@tfgm.com. This is really important as this register is used to log and monitor feedback from communities and provides a stronger position for challenging performance and service delivery.

As soon as the new bus franchising is rolled out for Oldham services, TfGM will be consulting on changes to bus routes to allow for better connected bus network from communities to key destinations, and it will also provide a much greater level of accountability from operators for higher levels of service standards.

The Bus Franchising programme will be rolled out across Oldham in 2024 and is expected to deliver simpler fares and ticketing, with the ability to enable more joined-up journey planning between bus and tram journeys.

9. Question submitted by Steve Croft

If you've seen my comments on our local forums, you'll know I'm no fan of fireworks. Last night we had the fireworks display after the switch-on and to my view they were more expansive than in previous years. That might be a subjective view based on the amount that they bothered us.

I have a question for the council: why are the council not setting some sort of example in either reducing the scale of the display or by using 'silent' fireworks?

This comes on the back of the council leader's comments recently that demonstrated the council are fully aware of the high number of people that find fireworks distressing.

Thanks in advance, and thanks for all the work you do for our area.

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, replied - Show duration: The display has gradually reduced from

an original 12 minutes to this year's 8 minutes so that the firework element is a finale to the main show which enables us to re-direct resources into working with local performers and artists and the development of the new style Switch On show. This also reduces the disturbance to the local community and elevates the overall impact whilst reducing the costs of delivering the display in line with the budget.

Show Size: The display this year substantially increased the use of quieter roman candle and lower-level effects and reduced the number of large aerial shells to fit with the music that was written for the show. This will have reduced the impact of noise over larger distances compared with previous years, but to reduce these levels further for the higher aerial effects in the future would have a significant effect on the view for audience members on the periphery of the event viewing areas, making the majority of the display hidden behind buildings etc.

Silent Show: 'Silent Fireworks' is not a term used by the pyrotechnic industry who prefer to use the term 'Quiet Fireworks'. This distinction is very important as anyone asking about 'silent' fireworks needs to understand that there is no such thing. Yes, there are quieter fireworks available which, while certainly quieter, are not silent. They are also less exciting, not only because noise is part of the visceral attraction of a fireworks display, but also because it is necessary for the propulsion and bursting of the highest-flying effects which are usually the most memorable and impressive parts of the display. Quieter fireworks result in a less impressive display that will be seen by less people and will cost more.

Noise levels: The display is not at full volume the whole time. It has its lulls as well as its climaxes. During those lulls, the noise is relatively modest. The fireworks are fired in conjunction with a soundtrack and if we have a prolonged section of quiet music to accommodate a prolonged section of quiet fireworks this would have a detrimental effect on the audience experience. To hear the full volume of the fireworks you would need to be very close to the Town centre firing zone as sound dissipates quickly the further away you are from it (Db levels reduce by approx. 6Db for every doubling of distance from a measured point. i.e., 120db at 15metres reduces to 114 at 30m). Wind direction also plays a big part. Noise is louder downwind than upwind of its source

Complaints: We did receive some feedback from residents that dislike fireworks but we also receive lots of positive feedback year on year from people who enjoy events that include firework displays and we have 8-10,000 people on average attend the 'Switch On' event which creates additional footfall for town centre businesses.

10. Question submitted by Stephen Ingham

It is great news that Council staff have started moving into the Spindles and that work has taken place to help businesses to relocate elsewhere in the shopping centre to allow this to happen.

I know that part of the point of locating Council staff in the Spindles is to put them closer to the shops and the new market and hopefully this will support these businesses to thrive. Can the council confirm how many staff are expected to work from

Spindles when the fit out for offices is complete and what the timetable is for this work?



Oldham
Council

Councillor Chadderton, Leader of the Council, replied: thank you for your question, Mr Ingham. We are currently finalising the floorplan which will ultimately determine the final number of staff that will occupy the new Spindles accommodation, at present we estimate between 800 and 1,000 staff will be in the Spindles at any one time with some officers working out in communities or at home from time to time depending on the nature of the services being provided.

One of the strategic drivers of the relocation is to ensure the ongoing sustainability of a thriving Town Centre recognised as a location with quality office space, accommodation, recreation and leisure opportunities.

11. Question submitted by Nicola Longshaw

I was pleased to see Oldham Council's cost of living package featured on BBC North West Tonight and referenced as the largest of its kind in Greater Manchester. At the last Council meeting the Leader referred to a dashboard to measure the demand for and impact of the 'We can help' campaign – can she give some further detail on what this dashboard shows us so far? Has the council received any government support to devise this package, or has it been put together solely from Oldham Council's own resources?

Councillor Chadderton, Leader of the Council, replied that the Cost of Living dashboard allows us to compare demand on our key services to the same time last year, and also tracks more recent changes. It is clear that demand has increased significantly over the last year. We also ask each service to comment on capacity; it is clear from their input that recent officer appointments funded by the Cost-of-Living package have been vital in allowing them to cope with the increase in demand. The dashboard is part of a larger body of intelligence work that is being used to target our limited resources more effectively. Officers are continuing to review and improve the data that is used to provide the required intelligence as part of a long-term strategy to support our residents proactively and efficiently. We have committed £3 million of funding to support Oldham's cost-of-living response. The majority of this investment is coming from the Council's own resources, while the Household Support Fund – a grant paid by Central Government – is contributing £295,000 to the response.

12. Question submitted by Dee (Dorice) Johnson

Our current prime minister was caught on camera earlier this year, bragging about cutting funding from the least wealthy areas, so he could give more money to richer areas. His predecessor crashed the economy, costing the country billions. Please can someone advise how these actions have impacted on funding for Oldham?

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon, replied that it is not possible to directly assess the

impact of the Prime Minister's comments. However, the Government allocates general revenue grant funding to Councils by means of a funding formula. Changes to the formula can result in a redistribution of grant between Councils. There have been no major changes to the general funding formula recently, although such changes have been discussed for some time including the introduction of the outcome of the Fair Funding Review which would use more up to date indices for factors such as deprivation in determining grant allocations. The Government has repeatedly deferred the introduction of Fair Funding. If it had been introduced, it would undoubtedly have increased the funding received by Oldham and reduced funding for more affluent boroughs.

Several questions, submitted by members of the public, remained unanswered at the end of the allotted 30 minutes period for this matter. The Mayor advised that the unanswered questions would be published on the Council's website, with written answers, in due course.

11

QUESTIONS TO LEADER AND CABINET

Councillor Sykes, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

Question 1: Housing Targets

The government's recent 'U-turn' on housing targets is to be welcomed will the Labour administration use this opportunity to stop, pause and consider its housing options in the Borough and to protect green spaces and green belt land in the borough of Oldham.

The Leader of the Council also welcomed the government's change of policy adding that the Council's position was not to build on green space, or green belt, land and to always look to promote the development of brownfield land first.

Question 2: Northern Care Alliance

Councillor Sykes referred to the current provision of NHS services in the Borough and the great pressures that they were facing currently and during the coming winter months, with the Royal College of Nursing staff due to take industrial action on 15th December 2022, for the first time. Northern Care Alliance are struggling to cope with the current situation. Councillor Sykes called on the Council to consider establishing a Joint Scrutiny Committee that would not just challenge current service provision but seek to work with Northern Care Alliance to lobby government for additional resources and for the provision of better treatment and facilities for the borough's residents.

The Leader of the Council shared Councillor Sykes' concerns regarding the present situation faced by the Northern Care Alliance and undertook to consider further his request for the establishment of a Joint Scrutiny Committee to oversee the operations of Northern Care Alliance.

Councillor Sheldon, Leader of the Conservative group

Question 1: Places for Everyone and Section 106 Agreements
Councillor Sheldon asked the Leader of the Council, if in the light of recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, would withdraw Oldham Council's involvement in the (Greater Manchester wide) Places for Everyone initiative. In addition Councillor Sheldon asked if processes could be established that would reduce the delays that often occurred, in the payment of Section 106 Agreement monies for common good, caused often as a result of detailed and lengthy discussions involving the Council's Planning Department.

The Leader of the Council replied that the Council had received the guidance from the Secretary of State but that the guidance was just that and was not yet enshrined in law and that as the Council's policy in this regard, was, as she had outlined earlier in her reply to Councillor Sykes, one of developing brownfield sites across the Borough first. In terms of Councillor Sheldon's remarks regarding Section 106 Agreement monies she felt that this wasn't a borough-wide problem, as she had not personally experienced any such delays in respect of the Ward that she represented, South Royton, for example. However, the Leader of the Council did commit to looking into any specific instances of delays of payment for Section 106 Agreement monies if Councillor Sheldon could forward to her details thereon.

Question 2: Salmon Fields Centre, Royton
Councillor Sheldon referred to a headline on the 'I Love Oldham' website on 29th November 2022, which announced the opening of new NHS community diagnostic centre at Salmon Fields, Royton. In welcoming this development, Councillor Sheldon noted that the new facility wouldn't have opened without extensive investment from the current Conservative government.

The Leader of the Council replied that she had nothing further to add to comments she had earlier made in relation to this matter.

Councillor Hobin, Leader of the Failsworth Independent Party

Councillor Hobin referred to Oldham's large waiting list for housing, believed to be more than 7,000 people, asking if any of the borough's housing stock was being allocated to people from outside of the borough who had little, or no, connection to the borough and was any provision being made for ex-service personnel?

The Leader of the Council replied by committing to circulate to Members of the Council a briefing paper which outlined how homes were allocated in the Borough of Oldham.

Question from Councillor Ibrahim:
I would like to address the poor housing conditions that many residents are living in across the borough. These are houses owned by both private landlords and housing associations. I

speaking not only for myself but for other members in this chamber who receive case work on this matter daily.

We have recently seen the outcome of the coroner's report into the death of the young child Awaab Ishaak in Rochdale. The poor conditions and the refusal of the housing association to address issues has shocked the country, and I'm sure every person in this chamber's hearts go out to Awaab's parents as they continue to grieve for their son.

Could the relevant Cabinet member advise what actions are being taken against landlords where poor housing conditions such as mould and damp, are dangerous to the health of residents; and how quickly action will be taken to ensure that no more preventable deaths like Awaab Ishaak's will happen in the borough.

Councillor Chadderton, Leader of the Council, replied Thank you for your question - I'm deeply saddened by the tragic death of Awaab Ishaak in Rochdale. On hearing the news at the beginning of this month I asked Harry Catherall, Chief Executive of the Council to launch a review of how we approach our housing stock to ensure we do not see a repeat of this sad event in Oldham.

Council-owned homes in Oldham are managed through our partners via a contractual arrangement which includes property repair and maintenance. Regular inspections are undertaken by the providers and there is also a lifecycle replacement programme for all of our properties.

Council officers have discussed the Rochdale case with these housing partners at the monitoring meetings and full reassurance has been provided.

More widely, all housing organisations have been asked to outline what existing measures are in place with regards to the current quality of homes, and to include details of mould, damp or water ingress. They've also been asked to report on what further measures, if any, need to be taken.

The council will hold the next meeting of the Strategic Housing Partnership in January where this issue will be a specific agenda item. All the registered social housing providers have been asked to bring with them an update from their organisation's perspective to offer reassurance for the council and our residents.

Our officers are undertaking daily inspections of temporary accommodation as part of welfare visits for the residents, and they are actively looking for signs of disrepair including mould and damp. Temporary accommodation providers are also being written to and asked to provide the same level of assurance as our other social housing partners.

Our social care teams are raising this issue and discussing it at their Safeguarding Boards and Partnership meetings to check on our supported accommodation.

Oldham Council also plans to refresh the Private Sector Stock Condition survey to ensure landlords of private accommodation improve and bring their homes up to a safe standard.

As a council we are doing everything we can to make sure no Oldham residents have to endure what Awaab and his family have.

Question from Councillor Nasheen

Residents have raised concerns about parking outside the First Choices Homes Depot on Primrose Bank for several years since it opened.

Ward Councillors have asked the council to install double yellow lines but for some reason no progress is being made.

Could the cabinet member please give us an update on the progress as we have had several near misses involving pedestrian and vehicles?

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods replied, thank you for your question. The request for possible parking restrictions outside the First Choice Homes Depot on Primrose Bank is currently being considered by the Council's Traffic and Parking Teams. Ward Members are being consulted on the initial proposals for the scheme ahead of public consultation.

These proposals are being considered across a slightly wider area, including Magnolia Gardens, to ensure the overall result is effective and does not simply displace the issues to another community. This needs careful consideration with the existing parking restrictions in the area balanced with the needs of local residents'.

If supported by the local community, the proposed works could be delivered within the next 6 to 9 months, but this totally depends on the feedback from the local community.

Question from Councillor Cosgrove

Can the relevant cabinet member give an update on the work the council is doing to address antisocial behaviour and the use of off-road bikes in St James ward and the rest of the Borough?

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods replied, that the use of off-road bikes and vehicle crime is a concern for us all, both in the St. James Ward and across the borough.

Unfortunately, GMP have a very small and specialist off-road bike team which is in significant demand. This is a very dangerous activity and many riders do not wear headgear – this restricts the opportunities for pursuit and enforcement at the time, even by the specialist team.

Resolution of this issue requires a much wider long-term problem-solving approach and Council colleagues from across a variety of services are working with GMP's Neighbourhood Policing Teams and the new Neighbourhood Prevention Hub to address this as a key priority.

It remains important that reports are made to GMP, with as much detail being provided as possible, such as vehicle details and registration numbers. There are a number of legal powers which can be used, not just against those riding the bikes, but against those involved in the storage and transportation of them, due to the associated nuisance they cause and services will be working together to explore all options and opportunities.

Intelligence regarding where vehicles are being stored and the vehicles which bring off-road bikes to a site is key to identifying

the individuals involved and the potential seizure of the bikes, using the available legislation.

Community Safety Services is working with other partners in the District and will use all the powers available to tackle these types of behaviours. For example they will share information and evidence with housing providers to enable tenancy enforcement action to be taken too, where it is appropriate to do so.

Question from Councillor Lancaster

Knowing how important the issue is to my ward Constituents, I have raised road safety in this chamber several times already and have been proud to support effective Motions proposed by my Conservative colleagues, Councillors Arnott and Byrne, in this policy area.

I would like to ask a Question about the difficulties in securing road safety interventions from the Council's Highways Department, primarily because of overly stringent adherence to narrow criteria.

There have long been resident calls for speed cameras to be introduced to cover the crossroads in Denshaw village centre, which I would of course support. Despite the most recent survey recording speeds well in excess of twice the 30mph limit, these calls have been quashed by OMBC, who continually cite Department for Transport and Transport for Greater Manchester guidelines. Other local authorities, however, have managed to act of their own accord. A ward Constituent has highlighted to me the example of Leicestershire County Council, who have used the discretionary powers available to them through the Road Traffic Act 1991 to introduce seven average speed camera trials, and I would be happy to provide more detail of this example in writing following this Meeting.

At another location in my ward, The Sound/Rose Hill junction in Delph, visibility of oncoming traffic is poor, and motorists and pedestrians alike could be assisted by the erection of a street mirror. However, again, my requests have been refused on the basis that an insufficient majority of the six-point criteria specified by the Greater Manchester authorities cannot be met. My Question is this – can this Administration please have a serious rethink about road safety, adopt a proactive, common-sense approach for the betterment of the whole Borough, and in the spirit of Cllr. Byrne's Motion from the September Meeting, be brave enough to use its powers independently?

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, replied, thank you for your question. In response to the complaints about vehicle speeds in Denshaw, automatic traffic counts were commissioned which provided evidence about the actual speeds of vehicles in the area, and this showed that speeds were not excessive. However, new surveys have been commissioned for early 2023 given recent concerns escalating once again.

However, as part of the response to these concerns, the Council has replaced the 30mph speed limit terminal signs with new highly visible signs and have also erected "Speed Toolkit" signs to ensure drivers are reminded of the speed limit.

I am advised that the old and faulty 30mph Vehicle Actuated Sign is due for replacement as part of a boroughwide replacement programme.

All safety cameras within Greater Manchester are deployed by Greater Manchester Police in partnership with the 10 Greater Manchester boroughs, and all costs associated with the effective running and enforcement of the cameras are shared and kept to the minimum.

Any decision to locate a fixed speed safety camera is based on the number of speed related collisions that have occurred within the immediate area. This criterion is set by the Department for Transport.

With regards to the request for a speed camera on the A672 Ripponden Road – the collision data shows that there have not been any serious speed related collisions recorded within the 30-mph speed limit through Denshaw, therefore it does not meet criteria.

Finally, with regards to installing mirrors on the highway to improve road safety, these are currently in a trial period to assess the impact of their introduction and reduction in road traffic collisions. Once the monitoring period has ended, a decision will be taken on whether mirrors provide the desired effect and should therefore be used at other sites across the borough.

Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani

Oldham has very ambitious plans with regards to the achievements of a net zero target by 2030, Councillor Jabbar referred earlier to the 'Green New Deal' delivery plan, for which, I believe, the pre-procurement phase finished in October. However, what are we doing now is the question? Given that we are in a climate crisis, action needs to be taken now. Could the Cabinet Member responsible tell me what progress has already been made on those net zero targets? What actual reduction in carbon emissions has been achieved? What council buildings have already been refitted to be energy efficient? and what net zero programmes so far have already been completed?

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet member for Finance and Low Carbon, replied thank you Madam Mayor, thank you Councillor Al-Hamdani for your question and thank you for your continued interest in this issue. Councillor Jabbar undertook to give Councillor Al-Hamdani a full written answer on the specific issues that he raised but in terms of what Oldham is doing, there are targets to reduce carbon emissions by 2030 for the Borough. At this moment in time, the Council is developing a solar farm at Wrigley Head which hopefully will be installed mid-summer 2023. The Council is looking at developing a district heating system using the flooded water in disused Coal Mines. The Council has recently obtained £2.3 million from Greater Manchester Combined Authority to put in measures to reduce carbon emission and for energy saving measures at the Spindles shopping centre, part of which is being converted to working offices. The Council is also working with Northern Roots to put forward some initiatives, including the installation of Solar Farms to achieve carbon reduction by producing power locally

from renewable sources. Oldham Council is doing what it can and is one of the leading Authorities in the Greater Manchester region in this regard.



Oldham
Council

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QUESTIONS ON CABINET MINUTES

The Council was requested to note the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the undermentioned date, to receive questions on any items within the minutes from members of the Council that are not members of the Cabinet and to receive appropriate responses from Cabinet members. The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17th October 2022 were submitted.

Members asked the following questions: -

a. Question from Councillor Hindle:

With reference to the Cabinet Minutes of the meeting held 17th October 2022, Councillor Hindle noted that a full agenda, including eight items of business was concluded in 24 minutes. He asked if there was ever any challenge to reports at Cabinet meetings or if these meetings were rubber-stamping exercises.

Councillor Chadderton, Leader of the Council, replied that there was a robust process for dealing with reports at Cabinet meetings including input from members of the public and that reports which are presented to Cabinet meetings have often been amended, as a result of challenges since their first iteration.

b. Question from Councillor Sykes

With reference to Minute 8 of the Cabinet meeting held on 17th October 2022, Councillor Sykes, welcomed the proposal to update the contract arrangements for residential and nursing home provision in the Borough. The Cabinet member was asked if there were plans for more in-borough facilities to be built, including more care homes to help to care for an aging population.

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care that the Council was looking to reduce the number of people entering into a residential care setting and to support as many people as possible to live independently for as long as possible.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Minutes of Cabinet held on 17th October 2022 be noted.
2. That the questions and responses thereon be noted.

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NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Motion 1 – Don't Take It Out On Us: Properly Funded Public Services

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Mushtaq SECONDED the following Motion:

Council Services cannot take any more cuts imposed by central government. Since 2010 Oldham has had 45% of its funding from central government cut, and since 2010 successive

Conservative Governments have forced local authorities to raise council tax in an attempt to meet this shortfall.

For over a decade Conservative Governments have forced councils – of every political persuasion – to raise council tax in order to run necessary services, leading to an abhorrent situation where the council runs less services despite increasing Council Tax. This is not sustainable.

We cannot afford more cuts, adult social care and children's services are the two biggest items in the Council's budgets. Cuts to these services would be hugely regressive and frankly put our residents across the Borough in danger.

Councils across the country are struggling to meet contractual inflationary pressures brought on by inflation of over 10%, and current estimates mean this Council's budget will not be able to cover these costs without further cuts.

The National Audit Office estimates that between 2010/11 and 2020-21 government funded spending power in Oldham reduced by 53.7% in real terms, that in 2019-20 social care accounted for 53.6% of all service spend for Oldham Council, and that in 2010-11 central government funding to Oldham's revenue budget equated to £203m and in 2019-20 that figure was £39.5m.

This Council notes:

- Local Government in England is responsible for delivering more services than any other tier of government.
- Local Authorities across the country are struggling as a result of a decade of austerity, the impact of Brexit, the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the cost-of-living crisis and the market reaction to the catastrophic September Mini-Budget left a huge hole in public finances.
- The Autumn Statement did not provide Local Authorities with the assurance they need and Oldham Council faces huge inflationary pressures in the coming year.
- That this administration has an ambitious £3m We Can Help cost-of-living support package for Oldham residents
- That the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities acknowledged last month that Council Tax is regressive
- The provisional local government finance settlement will not be delivered until the week commencing 21st December and the full settlement will not be known until February 2023.
- Oldhamers cannot afford to pay for the mistakes of this government.

This Council resolves:

- To aid the LGA's Don't Take It Out on Us Campaign, and highlight the extent of cuts of local government financing in Oldham
- Ask the Borough's MPs to join our calls for properly funded local government and social care
- To work collaboratively and cross-party with colleagues in Oldham, Greater Manchester and nationally to lobby for fair funding for local government and social care.

This Council further resolves:

- Continue to work with our partners across Oldham to provide good quality and cost-effective public services for Oldhamers.

- To invite all Group Leaders to write jointly to the Government to ask them to properly and fairly fund local government and social care so that local authorities aren't forced to hike Council Tax and invite Oldham residents to sign the letter
- To call for multi-year financial settlements to enable local authorities to plan properly and deliver the best services for our residents
- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to urge him to expedite the review into Council Tax so our residents aren't continually hammered by this regressive tax.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Arnott MOVED and Councillor McManus SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

Councils are not forced to increase council tax by any government of whatever hue. Since the 2011 Localism Act was introduced by the Conservative led Coalition government there has been a cap on the amount Councils can raise in council tax. If Councils like Oldham wanted to increase Council tax beyond the cap then a referendum is held, giving the electorate the final say. The permissible amount however is not a mandatory amount it is down to each local authority.

This mechanism was introduced after a decade of inflation busting council tax rises under the last Labour government which failed to stop Councils from behaving like the Sheriff of Nottingham from the tale of Robin Hood, which as a result saw council tax double in under a decade. After more than a decade in power in Oldham, Labour is forcing residents to pay one of the highest council tax rates in the Country.

This Labour administration chooses to increase Council tax, taking money out of people's pockets in Oldham. This is down to the failure by this Council to plan and manage its finances properly. As such it is time the Council looked to help people in Oldham by reducing waste and spending public money wisely and instead of writing letters take direct action to help local people. That is why this Council should freeze council tax to help hard pressed taxpayers.

This Council notes:

- Local Government in England is responsible for delivering more services than any other tier of government.
- The Autumn Statement did not provide Local Authorities with the assurance they need and Oldham Council faces huge inflationary pressures in the coming year.
- That this Council has a £3m We Can Help cost-of-living support package for Oldham residents
- The provisional local government finance settlement will not be delivered until the week commencing 21st December and the full settlement will not be known until February 2023.
- Oldhamers cannot afford to pay for the mistakes of this government. poorly managed and badly led Labour Borough Council.

This Council resolves to:

- Ask when the Borough's MPs will use an opposition day debate or table a private members bill in Parliament with calls for properly funded local government and social care.
- To stop wasting taxpayer's money and work collaboratively and cross-party with colleagues in Oldham, Greater Manchester and nationally to lobby for fair funding for local government and social care.

This Council further resolves:

- To work with our partners across Oldham to provide outstanding good quality and cost-effective public services for Oldhamers.
- For the relevant Cabinet member to write to the relevant Government Department/Minister and ask them to confirm if they will be looking to initiate a review which looks at the way adult social care is funded in England and look at ways it can be better funded.
- To call for multi-year financial settlements to enable local authorities to plan properly and deliver the best services for our residents
- To FREEZE council tax for the next financial year.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was LOST.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

RESOLVED

To aid the LGA's Don't Take It Out on Us Campaign, and highlight the extent of cuts of local government financing in Oldham:

- a. Asks the Borough's MPs to join our calls for properly funded local government and social care.
- b. That the Council works collaboratively and cross-party with colleagues in Oldham, Greater Manchester and nationally to lobby for fair funding for local government and social care.

This Council further resolves:

- c. Continue to work with our partners across Oldham to provide good quality and cost-effective public services for Oldhamers.
- d. To invite all Group Leaders to write jointly to the Government to ask them to properly and fairly fund local government and social care so that local authorities aren't forced to hike Council Tax and invite Oldham residents to sign the letter
- e. Calls for multi-year financial settlements to enable local authorities to plan properly and deliver the best services for our residents.
- f. Instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to urge him to expedite the review into Council Tax so our residents aren't continually hammered by this regressive tax.

Motion 2 – Investing in Children's Social Workers

Councillor Moores MOVED and Councillor Chadderton
SECONDED the following Motion:



The crisis in social care does not just impact adults social care and care homes, children's social care is experiencing a huge shortage of qualified social workers. This is in part due to the number of social workers opting to follow the agency route rather than having a permanent base at a local authority as part of the children's social care team.

In May 2022 the Independent Review of Children's Social Care was published and it recommended a number of regulatory reforms such as requiring newly qualified social workers to have completed two years of the propose early career framework before they can take up agency positions, to establish 'locum staff banks' run by local authorities on a not-for-profit basis so they could turn to them when demand calls for it.

The shortage of social workers is a national problem that requires national solutions, here in Oldham we are working to try and do our bit, including investing in making Oldham an attractive place to be a social worker, and working with our colleagues across Greater Manchester to limit private businesses' profiteering.

This Council notes:

- The Northern Ireland Department of Health has announced that from June 2023 they will no longer be using agency social workers.
- Private businesses are profiteering of the back of the crisis in children's social care, with the ADCS warning of the increased cost pressures and concerns of quality.
- That agency social workers have their place within the system and for some it is the optimum career path.
- A stable workforce leads to the best possible service for Oldham's children. Those in the system want to stick with the same social worker.
- In July of this year the President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services called for an outright ban on agency workers.

This Council Resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Department for Education:

- To ask them follow in Northern Ireland's footsteps and impose a ban or a quota on Agency Social Workers.
- To publish its response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care as soon as possible and establish further regulation on agency social work as recommended.
- To establish a fund for local authorities to set up not-for-profit staff banks to be the first port of call for temporary workers.

This Council further resolves to:

- To instruct the Director of Children's Services (DCS) to work with colleagues across Greater Manchester, and potentially the North West, to work together to attempt to reduce the reliance on agency social workers.
- To invest in Children's Services in order to recruit, retain and train the best social workers available and make Oldham an attractive place to be a social worker.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

RESOLVED

Council Resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Department for Education:

1. To ask them follow in Northern Ireland's footsteps and impose a ban or a quota on Agency Social Workers.
2. To publish its response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care as soon as possible and establish further regulation on agency social work as recommended.
3. To establish a fund for local authorities to set up not-for-profit staff banks to be the first port of call for temporary workers.

Council further resolves to:

4. To instruct the DCS to work with colleagues across Greater Manchester, and potentially the North West, to work together to attempt to reduce the reliance on agency social workers.
5. To invest in Children's Services in order to recruit, retain and train the best social workers available and make Oldham an attractive place to be a social worker.

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NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS

Motion 1 – Supporting our Armed Forces Community

Councillor Woodvine MOVED and Councillor Byrne SECONDED the following Motion:

The Royal British Legion (TRBL) have conducted a series of successful campaigns with the aim of improving the provision of public services for the Armed Forces community across the United Kingdom and promoting their entitlement and access to those services.

In November 2022, a new Armed Forces Covenant Duty came into force, as introduced by His Majesty's Government. This means legal obligations have been placed on the Metropolitan Borough Council of Oldham to show due regard to the principles of the Covenant, particularly in the policy areas of healthcare, housing, and education.

Regarding TRBL's 'Making the Benefits System Fit for Service' campaign this Council are already meeting most of the asks, which is positive, but there is more to do for the 5,941 veterans currently living in the Borough of Oldham.

This Council does disregard as income all payments made under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (2005), the War Pension Scheme, and Service Attributable Pensions in assessments for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support / Reduction, Discretionary Housing Payments and Disabled Facilities Grants.

This Council also disregards as income all payments of Service Invaliding Pensions (SIPs) in Discretionary Housing Payments and Disabled Facilities Grants, however, it does regard SIPs as occupational pensions and does not disregard them in assessments for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support / Reduction.

TRBL believes that Local Authorities should ensure that veterans are not forced to give up their military compensation to

pay for the same support to which their civilian counterparts are entitled. Military compensation is awarded to veterans, and sometimes their families, in recognition of the pain and loss of amenity brought about by injury and illness that was caused in Service. Military compensation is not income, and therefore should not be treated as such.

According to the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), there are only four practices who possess the ‘veterans friendly’ accreditation in the Borough of Oldham – those being Hill Top Surgery, Medlock Medical Practice, Royton Medical Centre and Saddleworth Medical Practice.

A University of Chester evaluation found that 84% of accredited practices said that they feel they have a better understanding of veterans’ needs after becoming accredited.

With respect to education, all state schools, academies, and free schools in England, which have children of service families in school years Reception to Year 11, can receive Service Pupil Premium (SPP) funding. SPP recognises the specific challenges children from Service families face, and the funding can be used to offer pastoral support and help mitigate the negative impact on Service children of family mobility and parental deployment. This Council resolves to act upon the two primary recommendations contained within TRBL’s ‘Unpaid carers in the Armed Forces community’ report, released in September 2021, by:

- Writing to all statutory bodies and those delivering statutory services in the Borough to ensure they routinely ask and record whether their patients and clients are a member of the Armed Forces community and if they have caring responsibilities.
- Urgently acting upon NHS England’s recommendation to consider how carers from the Armed Forces can be supported in local carers’ strategies, including how they can be encouraged to access support and take up a carer’s assessment.

In addition, this Council resolves that:

- The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive Officer shall immediately suspend the Council policy which considers SIPs as a source of income in assessments for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support / Reductions.
- The Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care shall write to all GP service providers in the Borough, that are not currently accredited, and encourage them to seek the ‘veterans friendly’ accreditation. And, add to Oldham’s carers’ strategy ways in which to better serve and support our Armed Forces community – something it currently does not do.
- The Cabinet Member for Education & Skills shall write to education providers in the Borough to strongly encourage parents, who are Service Personnel, to notify the schools, colleges, et cetera of their unique status in order that they qualify for SPP.
- The Leader of the Council shall present the contents of this proposal to representatives on the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and promote the positive impact the resolutions will have if acted upon by their respective Councils for the 68,037 veterans living across the GMCA area.

In relation to housing, this Council supports TRBL's responses to Local Government consultations concerning this policy area, and resolves to meet their requests for this Council to:

- Ensure that all residents approaching housing services are asked a question that will identify their membership of the Armed Forces community.
- Regularly review staff training processes to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the housing policies specific to the Armed Forces community.
- Use discretion in waiving the five-year limit and allow veterans to access housing support with an exemption from the local connection requirement regardless of the time elapsed since they left Service.
- Apply the local connection exemption to divorced or separated spouses or partners of Service Personnel who are separating or have done so, in the five years preceding their application.

Councillor Roberts MOVED and Councillor Chadderton SECONDED the following PROCEDURAL MOTION

That consideration of this Motion be referred to the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on the basis that the recommended actions, detailed above, are already being carried out by the Council. That the Policy Overview and Scrutiny be requested to investigate this matter and to submit a report thereon to Council in due course.

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

RESOLVED:

That consideration of this Motion be referred to the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for examination and that Committee be requested to submit a report thereon to Council in due course.

Motion 2 – Free School Meals and Winter Care Packages

Councillor H. Gloster MOVED and Councillor Williamson SECONDED the following Motion:

Britain is currently experiencing a severe squeeze on living standards, with unprecedented pressures on household income coupled with rising prices of goods and fuel – all of which are causing hardship across every income bracket in every community.

Putin's invasion of Ukraine; Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic have all put pressures on trade, leading to empty shelves in our shops and increased fuel prices.

Decisions made by the Conservative government have resulted in panic in the stock-markets, causing the pound to plummet to its lowest ever value against the US dollar since the dollar was introduced in 1792.

We face national and international problems that require national and international solutions.

Nevertheless, this Council believes that:

- Local government can drive ambitious and impactful changes that makes a real difference in people's everyday lives.
- This coming winter will be extremely difficult for many of our residents. There is a need for Oldham Council to do more, by offering practical support for those who need it.
- The administration's £3m cost-of-living response package is welcome, however, with only £1.2m committed to be spent this calendar year it represents a missed opportunity to offer more real and meaningful support this winter.

This Council notes:

Free school meal provision helps improve the mental and physical health of children, whilst tackling childhood obesity, malnourishment, and driving up educational achievement. A healthy meal at lunchtime allows children to concentrate in the afternoon, promotes the benefits of healthier eating; and makes a huge impact in tackling health inequalities.

Winter care packages - delivered to the vulnerable - would make a real difference to many who need support from this Council the most. The Council should explore opportunities for funding and submit robust bids where there is funding available. Every effort should be made to fund a winter care pack scheme for residents this winter, stocked with warm clothing, household essentials and information about key support services offered by the Council and other organisations.

This council resolves to:

Explore opportunities to support Oldham's primary schools with free school meal budget pressures as part of this Council's cost-of-living support package and emerging priorities fund.

Especially seeking to ensure that the positive impact of free school meal provision is not offset by the Conservative government's real terms cuts to school budgets in our Borough.

Develop a winter care package scheme for vulnerable households this winter – offering warm clothing, household essentials, useful information about council services and support offered by other organisations; and a friendly knock on the door to our most vulnerable residents.

Explore opportunities to tackle digital isolation and loneliness in Oldham Borough – ensuring that staff/volunteers at libraries, community spaces and warm hubs are resourced to assist people who may not have access to the internet, need help to access the internet, and need help to access Council and other agencies services.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Munroe MOVED and Councillor Ali SECONDED the following AMENDMENT

Council notes that Britain is currently experiencing a severe squeeze on living standards, with unprecedented pressures on household income coupled with rising prices of goods and fuel – all of which are causing hardship across every income bracket in every community.

Putin's invasion of Ukraine; Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic have all put pressures on trade, leading to empty shelves in our shops and increased fuel prices.

Decisions made by the Conservative government have resulted in panic in the stock-markets, causing the pound to plummet to its lowest ever value against the US dollar since the dollar was introduced in 1792.

We face national and international problems that require national and international solutions.

Nevertheless, this Council believes that:

- Local government can drive ambitious and impactful changes that makes a real difference in people's everyday lives.
- This coming winter will be extremely difficult for many of our residents. There is a need for Oldham Council to do more, by offering practical support for those who need it.
- Oldham Council has been a pioneering council in Greater Manchester, investing £3m over the next 2 years to offer practical and tangible support to those who need it across the borough"
- The administration's £3m cost-of-living response package is welcome and offers real and meaningful support this winter including providing vulnerable Oldhamers with Winter Warm Packs, with 436 requests for these within the first week of applications going live.

This Council notes:

Free school meal provision helps improve the mental and physical health of children, whilst tackling childhood obesity, malnourishment, and driving up educational achievement. A healthy meal at lunchtime allows children to concentrate in the afternoon, promotes the benefits of healthier eating; and makes a huge impact in tackling health inequalities.

The Labour Party's plan to introduce free breakfast clubs for every primary school as a first step towards a new modern childcare system is a welcome one and will help relieve pressures on families.

Providing necessary and essential items through the We Can Help package will make a real difference to many who need support from this Council the most. The Council should continue to explore opportunities for funding and continue to submit robust bids where funding is available. The Council will continue to work with partners to ensure that residents are able to access resources they need including warm clothing, food and household essentials, and are signposted to any and all support services offered by the council, government and other organisations

This council resolves to:

Explore opportunities to support Oldham's primary schools with free school meal budget pressures as part of this Council's cost-of-living support package and emerging priorities fund.

Especially seeking to ensure that the positive impact of free school meal provision is not offset by the Conservative government's real terms cuts to school budgets in our Borough. And to continue the work of the administration in supporting all children eligible for Free School Meals, including ensuring that all eligible are claiming Free School Meals and that families claiming free school meals are signposted to other support packages as part of the administration's "We Can Help" campaign.

Children and families who are struggling should not be forced to struggle more due to the Conservative Government's economic mismanagement, and it is the administration's priority to support residents through this crisis.

Continue to work with partners to ensure that vulnerable households are prioritised this winter – offering warm clothing, household essentials, useful information about council services and support offered by other organisations; and a friendly knock on the door to our most vulnerable residents.

Explore opportunities to tackle digital isolation and loneliness in Oldham Borough – ensuring that staff/volunteers at libraries, community spaces and warm hubs are resourced to assist people who may not have access to the internet, need help to access the internet, and need help to access Council and other agencies services.

On being put to the Vote the AMENDMENT was CARRIED.

On being put to the Vote the MOTION as AMENDED was CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

That this Council will:

1. Explore opportunities to support Oldham's primary schools with free school meal budget pressures as part of this Council's cost-of-living support package and emerging priorities fund. Especially seeking to ensure that the positive impact of free school meal provision is not offset by the Conservative government's real terms cuts to school budgets in our Borough.
2. To continue the work of the administration in supporting all children eligible for Free School Meals, including ensuring that all eligible are claiming Free School Meals and that families claiming free school meals are signposted to other support packages as part of the administration's "We Can Help" campaign. Children and families who are struggling should not be forced to struggle more due to the Conservative Government's economic mismanagement, and it is the administration's priority to support residents through this crisis.
3. Continue to work with partners to ensure that vulnerable households are prioritised this winter – offering warm clothing, household essentials, useful information about council services and support offered by other organisations; and a friendly knock on the door to our most vulnerable residents.
4. Explore opportunities to tackle digital isolation and loneliness in Oldham Borough – ensuring that staff/volunteers at libraries, community spaces and warm hubs are resourced to assist people who may not have access to the internet, need help to access the internet, and need help to access Council and other agencies services.

Councillor Chadderton MOVED and Councillor Sheldon SECONDED a report of the Director of Legal Services, which informed members of actions taken following the meeting of the Council on 2nd November 2022.

Since the publication of the agenda for this Council meeting, a response had been received from a government department on the Motion that related to the Regulation of Houses of Multiple Occupation, which had been circulated to all Council members.

RESOLVED - That the actions regarding motions and issues from the meeting of the Council on 2nd November 2022 be noted.

16

POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW

Councillor Chadderton MOVED and Councillor Jabbar SECONDED a report of the Chief Executive/(Acting) Returning Officer which advised Council that in November 2021 the independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England published its final recommendations report for new electoral arrangements for Oldham Council. Electoral reviews are carried out to see whether the boundaries of wards within a local authority need to be altered to ensure effective local government and electoral equality. Electoral equality is achieved when all councillors represent roughly the same number of electors.

Oldham Council had not been reviewed since 2003 and the Commission decided that it should review Oldham in advance of the elections in 2023.

The Commission decided that Oldham should have 60 councillors representing 20 three-councillor wards across the borough. The boundaries of 17 wards have changed, while three wards would remain unaltered. This will be used for the May 2023 elections and onwards.

Based on the final recommendations Oldham Council had undertaken a review of polling districts and polling places in the area. The review was held under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

The details of the Polling District proposals including the maps of each Polling District were circulated to Members.

A revised list of the new polling districts, polling places and polling stations was attached at Appendix A to the report.

An AMENDMENT to the report's recommendations was MOVED by Councillor Jabbar and SECONDED by Councillor Chadderton and the Council agreed to suspend Procedure Rule 13.1 to permit the consideration of the amendment. The amended Motion rejected the proposal that district C05 be split between C03 and C06 and instead proposed that C05 be retained and the polling place (mobile on Broome Street) remain. The proposed revised list for the Coldhurst Ward was circulated for Council's information. This would mean that subsequent polling places in the Coldhurst ward will remain unchanged. All polling station numbers from Station 26 would therefore be re-numbered bring the total number of polling stations in the borough to 120.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve the new polling districts and polling places and the polling stations be determined by the Returning Officer, as detailed in Appendix A, of the submitted report, further to the final proposals circulated, subject to the inclusion of the amended proposals for the Coldhurst Ward (moved and seconded by Councillors Jabbar and Chadderton respectively) above.

17

CLEAN AIR SCRUTINY PROPOSALS

Councillor Chadderton MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED a report of the Director of Environment, that sought approval for accepting a proposal to establish a 'Greater Manchester Joint Scrutiny Committee' to scrutinise decisions of the 'Clean Air Charging Authorities Committee' and the 'Clean Air Administration Committee'.

The Clean Air Charging Committee was established in October 2021 by the ten districts of Greater Manchester. The Committee shall have power to take all such decisions of the Constituent Authorities (as charging authorities) that must be taken jointly under Part 3 of, and Schedule 12 to, the Transport Act 2000 and any regulations made thereunder. This includes but is not limited to: Making and varying a joint local charging scheme order; Decisions of the charging authority under such a joint local charging scheme and the Road User Charging Schemes (Penalty charges, Adjudication and Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2013.

A recorded vote was requested and taken on the RESOLUTION as follows:

COUNCILLOR		COUNCILLOR	
Ahmad Riaz	ABSENT	Iqbal Javid	APOLOGIES
Akhtar Shoab	FOR	Islam Nazrul Mohammed	APOLOGIES
Al-Hamdani Sam	ABSENT	Jabbar Abdul	FOR
Ali Mohon	FOR	Kenyon Mark	ABSTAIN
Alyas Mohammed	APOLOGIES	Lancaster Luke	AGAINST
Arnott Dave	AGAINST	Marland Alicia	APOLOGIES
Azad Ali Montaz	APOLOGIES	McLaren Colin	FOR
Ball Sandra	AGAINST	McManus Chris	AGAINST
Barnes Robert	AGAINST	Moore Eddie	FOR
Bashforth Marie	FOR	Munroe Leanne	FOR
Bashforth Steven	APOLOGIES	Murphy Dave	ABSTAIN
Birch Ros	FOR	Mushtaq Shaid	ABSENT
Brownridge Barbara	FOR	Nasheen Umar	FOR
Byrne Pam	AGAINST	Phythian Clint	FOR

Chadderton Amanda	FOR	Phythian Kyle	FOR
Chauhan Zahid	APOLOGIES	Quigg Lewis	APOLOGIES
Cosgrove Angela	FOR	Rea Lucia	AGAINST
Dean Peter	FOR	Roberts Hannah	FOR
Gloster Chris	ABSTAIN	Salamat Aqeel Ali	ABSENT
Gloster Hazel	ABSTAIN	Sharp Beth	AGAINST
Goodwin Chris	FOR	Sheldon Graham	AGAINST
Hamblett Louie	ABSTAIN	Shuttleworth Graham	FOR
Harrison Jenny	FOR	Surjan Ruji	FOR
Hindle Neil	AGAINST	Sykes Howard	ABSTAIN
Hobin Brian	AGAINST	Taylor Elaine	FOR
Hulme George	FOR	Wilkinson Mark	AGAINST
Hussain Aftab	ABSENT	Williams Steve	FOR
Hussain Fida	FOR	Williamson Diane	ABSTAIN
Hussain Sajed	FOR	Woodvine Max	AGAINST
Ibrahim Nyla	FOR	Garry Elaine (MAYOR)	FOR

On a recorded VOTE being taken 27 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the RESOLUTION with 13 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 6 ABSTENTIONS. The RESOLUTION was therefore **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council approves the establishment of a 'Greater Manchester Joint Scrutiny Committee' to scrutinise decisions of the 'Clean Air Charging Authorities Committee' and the 'Clean Air Administration Committee'
2. That the appointment of a Lead Member and a Deputy member for the Greater Manchester Joint Scrutiny Committee, be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Council's Party Leaders.

18

MUNICIPAL CALENDAR 2023/24

Councillor Chadderton MOVED and Councillor Sheldon SECONDED a report of the Director of Legal Services which sought approval of the draft Calendar of Meetings for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Council's Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2023/24 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.

19

CIVIC APPRECIATION NOMINATIONS 2023

Councillor Chadderton MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED an amended report, that was circulated for member's consideration and which sought approval for the nominations of for Keira Arnold, Ibrahim Yousaf and Hannah Miah to receive the Civic Appreciation Award, in recognition of their service and dedication to the local community and the borough of Oldham.

Keira Arnold, Ibrahim Yousef and Hannah Miah are being proposed for this award in recognition of their significant voluntary contribution and dedication to the local community and borough of Oldham.

RESOLVED:

That Keira Arnold, Ibrahim Yousef and Hannah Miah be approved as recipients of the Civic Appreciation Award 2023, with the formal Ceremony to take place at the Council meeting on Wednesday, 15th March 2023.

20

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR REVIEW 2022/23

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Chadderton SECONDED a report of the Director of Finance, which advised Council of the performance of the Treasury Management function of the Council for the first half of 2022/23 and which also provided a comparison of performance against the 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators.

The Council was asked to consider the performance of the Treasury Management function in order to comply with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2021). The submitted report therefore established the key Treasury Management issues for Members' information and review and outlines, namely: an economic update for the first six months of 2022/23; 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 2022/23; a review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2022/23; why there has been no debt rescheduling undertaken during 2022/23; and a review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2022/23.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council approves the Treasury Management activity for the first half of the financial year 2022/23 and the projected outturn position.
2. That Council approves 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.
3. That Council approves amendments to the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) as set out in the table at section 2.4.5.

The meeting started at 2.30pm and ended at 5.55pm.