

**COUNCIL**  
**13/12/2023 at 6.00 pm**



**Present:** The Mayor – Councillor Chauhan (in the Chair)

Councillors Adams, Akhtar, Al-Hamdani, Ali, Arnott, Ball, M. Bashforth, S. Bashforth, Birch, Bishop, Brownridge, Byrne, Charters, Cosgrove, Davis, Dean, Fryer, Ghafoor, H. Gloster, Goodwin, Hamblett, Harkness, H. Harrison, J. Harrison, Hince, Hindle, Hobin, Hurley, F Hussain, J. Hussain, S. Hussain, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Irfan, Islam, Jabbar, Kenyon, Lancaster, Malik, Marland, McLaren, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Nasheen, Quigg, Rea, Shah, Sharp, Sheldon, Shuttleworth, Surjan, Sykes, Taylor, Wahid, Williamson and Woodvine

1           **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

2           **TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE COUNCIL HELD ON 1ST NOVEMBER 2023 BE  
SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

**RESOLVED:**

That, subject to the correct spelling of Mr Dave McGealy's name (further to Minute 5), the Minutes of the meeting of Council, held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023, be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

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

There were no declarations of interests.

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

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

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

The Mayor referred to the recent sad news of the passing of former Councillor Eileen Joynes, who had represented the Borough's Hollinwood Ward, on behalf of the Liberal Democrat party and he permitted Councillors Sykes, Jabbar and Sheldon to pay their individual condolences and tributes. Council held a minute's silence in memory of Councillor Eileen Joynes. Further to Minute 4 of the meeting of Council held 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023, the Mayor reported that he had received a reply from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the cross-party letter that he had forwarded calling for an immediate ceasefire in the conflict in Gaza.

The Mayor welcomed a new political grouping on the Council: the Oldham Group, which comprised the three Hollinwood Ward Councillors.

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

There were no petitions for Council to consider.

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## **YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Youth Council PROPOSED the following MOTION:  
**Unused Stationery Within the Council and its Partners**

Oldham youth council put forward the motion with the aims to address the issue of access to stationery and educational resources, which has a significant impact on the educational opportunities of our young people.

Council recognises that since the COVID 19 pandemic Oldham Youth Council have made poverty and the cost of living as priority issues and have undertaken work to improve the lives of Oldham's Young People. This includes:

- Sitting on the Oldham Town Centre board to input on decisions around the town centre improvements.
- Working with the Council's post 16 team around employability and NEET young people
- 2022 motion to Council asking that the Chief Executive writes to Government to extend the offer of the Holiday Activities and Food programme to all young people not just those on free school meals.

Council notes:

- That according to the Times Educational Supplement survey, in partnership with the National Education Union, 94% of surveyed teachers resort to using their personal funds to purchase necessary equipment for their students.
- That according to a UNISON survey, of 6,672 of its members, showed that even though they were worried their pay would not cover spiralling living costs, more than one in five (23%) have used their own money to pay for pens and pencils for their students.
- That energy bills and the pressures of inflation are continuing to burden schools' budgets with less money to support students financially.

Council recognises:

- The importance of quality education in shaping the future of our community, but that a significant number of pupils in Oldham face challenges in accessing essential stationery items required for school.
- With the Council departments currently looking to move to the spindles this is a prime opportunity to take stock of any unused stationery. With everyone having calculator apps on their laptops or mobile phones, and offices becoming paperless, the need for pens, rulers and physical calculator has reduced.

We propose that Oldham Council therefore resolves to:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to all department heads asking that teams look at current stocks of pens, pencils, pencil sharpeners, rubbers, rulers and calculators (including badged



merchandise), and any items not required for the running of that department, to be donated and used to create packs that can be distributed to students most in need.

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to partners (including Miocare, Greater Manchester Police, NHS, Action Together, positive steps, OCL, and Greater Manchester fire service) also donate any unused stationery.
- Work with Oldham Youth Council to create packs containing essential stationery items and help us distribute them to schools.

Councillor Mushtaq spoke in support of the Motion

Councillor Birch spoke in support of the Motion

Councillor Harkness spoke in support of the Motion

Councillor S. Bashforth spoke in support of the Motion

Councillor Arnott spoke in support of the Motion

Councillor Mushtaq **MOVED** and Councillor Birch **SECONDED** the **MOTION**, as presented by the Youth Council.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Chief Executive be requested to write to all department heads asking that teams look at current stocks of pens, pencils, pencil sharpeners, rubbers, rulers and calculators (including badged merchandise), and any items not required for the running of that department, to be donated and used to create packs that can be distributed to students most in need.
2. That the Chief Executive be requested to write to partners (including Miocare, Greater Manchester Police, NHS, Action Together, positive steps, OCL, and Greater Manchester fire service) asking that they also donate any unused stationery.
3. That the Council work with Oldham Youth Council to create packs containing essential stationery items and help us distribute them to schools.

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**PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

1. Question from Pat Highley

Please could the council give serious thought to the siting and funding, including maintenance of two AEDs (Automotive External Defibrillator) in two of the borough's largest parks, Tandle Hill Park Royton and Alexandra Park Oldham.

Both of these parks have a heavy footfall and are used for sporting events as well as walking, running and cycling.

If only one life is saved, then they will be worth every penny. The longer a person goes without effective CPR and defibrillation, the less likely they are to survive.

You can make a difference, please help to save lives.

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet member for Health and Social Care thanked Pat Highley for her question. I can confirm that there is a defibrillator in Alexandra Park within the main office, which was donated to the park by a local family. At present, this is only accessible while the office is open, Monday to Friday 7:30 to 17:00, however we will ensure events and groups using

the park outside these hours are aware of the defibrillator and have access to it in an emergency.

We don't currently have a defibrillator at Tandle Hill Park, but I've asked Council teams to explore options for how one can be available in alignment with the Council's Community Defibrillator Policy.

We would welcome support from any private sector partners, local businesses or families if they wish to come forward to help supply and maintain community defibrillators. This can be through charitable contributions or social value commitments.

2. Question from Megan Birchall

What are we doing to support our businesses across the borough to ensure our people and economy thrive?"

Councillor Fida Hussain, Cabinet member for Business, Employment and Enterprise replied, thanked Megan Birchall for her question. There are a range of things that we are doing to support businesses in the Borough. This ranges from direct business support aimed at helping businesses to start-up, grow and invest in the Borough through to a series of physical regeneration projects that will provide the foundations for businesses, people and our economy to thrive.

The direct support includes a general business advice and guidance, sector specific support, workforce development, access to finance, digital and low carbon support. All of this support is underpinned by a variety of engagement events and comms activity to ensure that businesses know how to access the support on offer.

The Council also works in close partnership with GMCA Growth Company to broker in support available at a regional level for businesses where applicable.

In addition to this, there are a series of physical projects aimed at supporting our businesses, people and economy to thrive.

These include plans for a renewed purpose for Oldham Town Centre as a creative place with a vibrant night-time and cultural economy, more jobs and homes, including:

- Redevelopment of the Spindles to include a new market, retail space, office and events space
- A new performance and theatre space for Oldham
- development of the Green Shoots business centre to support business growth in the emerging Green Tech sector.

In addition to the above we are also trying to support our businesses, our people and the economy by:

- Increasing the amount the council spends with local companies and suppliers
- Delivering a more ambitious and proactive approach to place marketing
- Supporting businesses to recruit residents through our range of Get Oldham Working initiatives
- Developing a new employment and skills strategy and Oldham Skills Plan for the borough

And finally supporting the development of Atom Valley which will create 20,000 jobs, supporting local companies to innovate and get new opportunities as part of a package of supply chain opportunities.

### 3. Question from Conor Green

What are we doing to ensure our children and young people are getting the best possible education and employment opportunities?

Councillor Ali, Cabinet member for Education and Skills replied that 2023 saw significant system-wide improvements to the early years, education, and skills landscape in Oldham. 2024 will be an exciting year; we are in a strong position to deliver our ambitious plans to further improve outcomes for children and young people.

We supported the opening of the Brian Clarke Academy as part of a Trust which has the best secondary attainment outcomes in the borough, and from the early data, the progression of the children at year 7 and Year 8 I am very hopeful that it will produce some of the best results in Oldham. The approval of the Eton-Star sixth form college will add 240 high-quality places each year from 2026.

We have prioritised attendance as the foundation of positive outcomes. All Oldham's schools work in collaboration with the Council to target system resource where it can improve attendance the most. The impact can be seen in the improvement in our absence rates across the system.

We have improved outcomes for children and young people at all stages of their education journey (KS4, KS2 writing/maths and in early years), setting the stage on further improvements over the coming years. Whilst our improving outcomes for free school meal children show that we are helping to improve social mobility, we are ambitious for all our most vulnerable children and young people.

The second part of Mr Green's question is about employment. As Chair of the Employment and Skills Board, I have identified young people's employment as a priority area, and there are lots of plans in place. Just few months, on behalf of the administration I tasked the Council to organise young people's career event, bringing young people and employers under roof, which was a successful event, attended by 450 people. Delighted to be linking young people with opportunities.

### 4. Question from Shahdab Qumer

I can see all the work taking place in the town centre can I ask the cabinet member when we will see it starting to make a difference to people's lives? When will the homes be ready and the new cultural offer be used?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council thanked Shahdab Qumer for the question. Our communities, residents and businesses are at the heart of everything we do. Our town centre regeneration scheme is not just about creating a better place, we're determined to create opportunities for our residents, our communities and for future generations.

Regenerating Oldham is of course about improving our town, making it a great place to live, work, and get on in life. But there's another hugely important aspect to what we're doing.



We're creating decent well-paid jobs and apprenticeships for people when they need them most. Because of our regeneration activity, 72 Oldhamers now have new jobs created as a direct result of the projects being delivered. And that's only the beginning.

We're keeping money in the borough too, with over £24m spent with local suppliers and businesses – everything from plants to pipes.

Oldham is facing one of the biggest housing crisis'. This project, along with others we're working on is starting to deal with this, ensuring local people have access to decent, quality homes.

We are delighted to have entered a long-term delivery partnership with award winning developer Muse Places who have a strong track record of delivery and share a joint ambition to build up to 2,000 much needed new homes in the Town Centre over the course of the initial 15 years of the agreement. We had our first partnership board meeting a couple of weeks ago, it was really productive and I'm glad to see that lots of hard work has already progressed. Work is already underway in drawing up proposals for the first three sites, the former sports centre, former magistrates court and Civic centre, which will also involve extensive public consultation next year.

The outcome of the public consultation will then feed into the proposals ahead of formal planning applications being submitted.

In parallel with this process, site preparation works will also be taking place next year so that building new homes can commence in 2025.

#### 5. Question from Dhanyall Rashid

The impact of the Don't Trash Oldham campaign is evident in the area I live in it's much cleaner and the back alleys are so much better, what will be done to make sure it stays this way and doesn't go backwards? Also, some areas keep getting bad again and what will be done about this please? Regarding putting cameras in alleyways?

Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods thanked Danyall Rashid for the feedback about the successes of the Don't Trash Oldham campaign.

We recognise that the challenge around keeping the borough clean is continuous and we are working closely with residents and ward members to ensure that our communities are proud of where they live and actively take part in helping to ensure the areas stay clean and tidy to ensure the success achieved through the Don't Trash Oldham campaign over the last 2 years is maintained.

Moving forward, engagement with local communities remains a priority and our resources focus on persistent and criminal fly tippers – taking legal action where appropriate. To help with this process, we are bidding for additional funding, which, if successful, will support the purchase of additional cameras which we will place at suitable locations to deter fly tipping and to catch those responsible.

#### 6. Question from Ghazala Rana

Having worked in the care sector for most of my life and knowing the challenges faced by the sector because of the lack of funding can the cabinet member please tell me how Oldham Council are managing to provide the care needed under these circumstances?



Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet member for Health and Social Care, expressed thanks for the question, and for all her hard work in the care sector over the years.

You are absolutely right about the challenges facing social care and particularly funding.

Adult's social care is one of the biggest spending departments in this Council exactly because we have a duty under the Care Act to ensure the quality of services meet the needs of the residents in the locality.

In order to meet this duty in Oldham we annually review the fees we pay to providers regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The review considers the annual increases faced by employers, including in Oldham, the Living Wage Foundation rate which we as a Council has committed to pay all suppliers, including social care providers.

The review also factors in any cost-of-living increases linked to prices for fuel and food. Prior to setting the fees for the forthcoming financial year we consult with providers ensuring that they have an opportunity to provide any feedback and things for further consideration.

In order to verify that services are of good quality and are meeting peoples' needs we contract and quality assure commissioned provision through a combination of monitoring reports and visits, which can be both announced and unannounced. Regular meetings are held with other key stakeholders such as the NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board, the Northern Care Alliance and Healthwatch to share information, monitor and manage any risks identified.

Where concerns arise with a care provider, we work with them to support them with the improvement required.

In addition, Oldham's Adult Social Care Market Position Statement, helps the service when working in partnership with the provider market, to advise of the areas where there is a need for either more or less care provision. An area where the service has identified further work is required is complex nursing care provision, the service is working closely with partners to address this.

I'm sure I speak for Social Care portfolio holders up and down the Country when I say we really need the Government to do their bit here and fix social care. For a long time Councils have been a sticking plaster but before long we won't be able to hold back the tide.

We've made a number of changes to how we operate in Oldham – and I want to publicly thank our staff for the way they've changed their working behaviour, quite radically in some instances – because we're trying to deliver the best possible services for as little money as possible.

And in some cases, that's really difficult to do, we want everyone in Oldham who comes into contact with our adult's social care

team, no matter what age or ailment, to be independent, healthy, safe and well.  
This is no easy task, but I think we're making really good progress towards this.

7. Question from Karl Bardsley

In light of recent concerns about the accuracy of financial information provided to Oldham residents by Cllr Abdul Jabbar, Oldham's finance lead regarding the total debt and debt interest I would like to request that the finance lead addresses this matter in the next council meeting.

Can the finance lead clarify the discrepancies and reassure residents about the accuracy of future financial reporting? Furthermore, does the finance lead plan to resign in light of these concerns?

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Resources, thanked Mr Bardsley for his question. It's hard for me to respond properly because I do not know what Mr Bardsley is referring to.

In fact, I was quite alarmed that I might've misspoke and given incorrect information regarding this council's finances.

As a result, I asked the finance team to check back against anything I said at the last full Council meeting and have been assured that there are no inaccuracies, and that the information I provided is the same information which was submitted to Audit Committee on 31st October 2023.

So, I remain satisfied that I have fulfilled my responsibilities regarding accurate financial reporting, and as much as it would bring Mr Bardsley and the Oldham Conservatives pleasure, I shall not be resigning.

Several questions, submitted by members of the public, remained unanswered at the end of the allotted 15-minute period for this matter. The Mayor, advised that the unanswered questions would be published to the Council's website, with written answers, in due course.

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## **REPORTS OF THE LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS**

Council agreed that the Council Procedure Rules would be varied so that there would be 10 minutes for questions to the Leader from Group Leaders and 10 minutes for the section on portfolio responsibilities.

### **Councillor Sykes, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group**

#### Question 1: Newsome and Ridgeway Report

Councillor Sykes noted that it was now approximately 18 months since the shocking details of the Newsome and Ridgeway report into the review into historic safeguarding practices in the borough of Oldham was published, which revealed how responsible agencies in the borough had let many children down. Councillor Sykes asked, if, 18 months on from the report's publication how many officers of the Greater Manchester Police, health care services and of the relevant departments of the



Council had faced disciplinary action as a result of the widespread failings?



**Oldham**  
Council

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that the findings of the report were indeed shocking but in the intervening years since the events occurred there had been big changes in working cultures and relevant staff had received a full training programme in how to deal with cases relating to sexual abuse and other safeguarding concerns. Councillor Shah advised that she did not have, to hand, details of the numbers of people who had faced disciplinary actions, relating to this matter but she undertook to write to Councillor Sykes with the information that he had requested.

**Question 2: Oldham Coliseum Theatre**

Councillor Sykes asked about proposals to redevelop the Oldham Coliseum theatre. Previous attempts to redevelop the theatre in 2013 and 2019 had ‘fell through’ and a further attempt in 2022 resulted in plans for a revamped theatre but with a reduced seating capacity of 260, down from the current capacity of 55 at its Fairbottom Street site. Initial reports had indicated that the Fairbottom Street site was at the end of its life but a report, commissioned by the Theatre’s Board of Trustees had found otherwise. Therefore, Councillor Sykes asked if it would be more prudent to invest funding in preserving the existing site at Fairbottom Street site rather than risk investing in a new site. Given that there was a report indicating that maintaining a working theatre at the Fairbottom Street site was still viable, Councillor Sykes asked if the Council had been misled about future intentions regarding the Coliseum theatre.

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that her administration was aware of the importance of the Coliseum Theatre for residents of the Borough and accordingly was involved in ongoing meetings with interested parties to maintain a viable theatre in the town centre.

**Councillor Sheldon, Leader of the Conservative Group**

Councillor Sheldon referred to recent well publicised dog attacks and the inclusion of the XL Bully Dog on the ‘banned breeds list’ noting that the current time would be an opportune moment to encourage responsible dog ownership. Councillor Sheldon noted that the vast majority of dog owners were responsible people who cared deeply for their pets but there was a minority of owners who allowed their dogs to behave badly, without proper control. Councillor Sheldon asked, with Christmas approaching, if the Leader of the Council would join him in promoting responsible dog ownership, noting that dogs were ‘for life and not just Christmas.’

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that she shared Councillor Sheldon’s concerns in this regard.

**Councillor Hobin, Leader of the Failsworth Independent Party**

Councillor Hobin asked about funding for the Oldham Coliseum Theatre. A recent publication had noted that the Coliseum had received upwards of £860,000 of funding, he asked what how this money was being utilised and if there was an associated programme of events?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, undertook to answer Councillor Hobin's question in writing.

**Councillor Hince, Leader of the Independent Group**

Councillor Hince noted that the lack of affordable housing in the Borough was a major problem. Home builders should be required to provide a percentage of affordable homes at each development site but in certain circumstances loopholes in the law exempted them from this requirement. Therefore, Councillor Hince asked the Leader of the Council what mechanisms were in place to prevent this practice from occurring and, so that affordable homes can be spread out fairly across the Borough.

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, undertook to answer Councillor Hince's question in writing.

**Councillor Ghafoor, Leader of the Oldham Group**

Councillor Ghafoor did not have a question for the Leader of the Council on this occasion.

The Mayor invited the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members to present their reports and invited non-executive members to ask questions thereon, as follows:

- a. Leader and Reform and Regeneration Portfolio – including the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and the minutes of the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

Councillor Sykes – in light of Mayor Burnham's forthcoming announcement on the Clean Air Zone, does the Leader think it is appropriate that cameras put in place for the original zone should be handed over to Greater Manchester Police without proper scrutiny or consultation? Would they not be put to better use if Council's repurposed them for safer streets initiatives? How does the Combined Authority plan to recoup the more than £3 million it spent putting CAZ signs up which turned out never to be needed? And how much money has been wasted exploring unwanted and undeliverable versions of the Clean Air Zone, only for the scheme to be scaled back at the eleventh hour to cover a smaller area?

Councillor Shah Leader of the Council replied that can confirm that Oldham is supporting a proposal for an 'investment led' Clean Air Plan as one of the 10 Greater Manchester authorities. If this is agreed at the GM Air Quality Admin Committee on the 20<sup>th</sup> December the proposal will be submitted to the Government before Christmas for their consideration.

This proposal involves the Government investing into Zero Emission Buses across GM as well as offering assistance to taxi

owners to replace any non-compliant vehicles that are licensed in GM.

It can be evidenced that this investment will reduce the pollution levels to below the legal limit across GM without the need for a charging zone and it is this approach that it is hoped the Government approves and funds.

Concerning the question regarding the cameras, there will be another period of public consultation where the future of the cameras will be considered in detail once GM has had full and formal feedback from Government on the Clean Air Plan following the submission of this additional evidence.

All the signage and the cameras from the previous proposal were funded by central Government and therefore any decisions regarding the signage and future use of the cameras will be made in consultation with Government after their feedback on the GM 'Investment led' Clean Air Plan.

Councillor McLaren asked could the Leader give an update on the work being done with colleagues at Rochdale Council and the GMCA to make Stakehill a vital part of the Atom Valley investment zone?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council replied, thanked Councillor McLaren for his question.

For those who may not be aware, Atom Valley is a hugely significant economic growth package of three sites in the North-Eastern area of Greater Manchester. This includes the Northern Gateway site between Bury and Rochdale, Kingsway site in Rochdale, and importantly for Oldham an extension of the Stakehill site, which crosses the boundary of Oldham and Rochdale).

Over the last 12 months, Oldham Council has been working closely with Rochdale Council and other partners like Transport for Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, to bring forward the various packages of work needed to develop the Stakehill Site.

This includes an in-depth analysis of transport connectivity to make sure that all residents will have the ability to access the jobs available at these sites, and for local businesses to connect for supply chains and contract awards. This work will also help to identify the infrastructure needed to make sure the site can be developed in a timely manner.

It is pleasing to see the recognition of the strategic importance of Atom Valley by the Government through the recent allocation of Investment Zone status with a focus of Advanced Manufacturing and Materials.

I strongly believe that all three sites across Atom Valley, and the whole of Greater Manchester will benefit from the allocation of the Investment Zone and I'm pushing to go as fast as possible so we can reap the benefits as soon as possible.

We're working closely with the Mayor, Rochdale, Bury, to take levelling up into our own hands, Atom Valley is about creating the landscape for the next industrial revolution, it's about creating the opportunity for the Ferranti's and Platt Brothers of the future to sprout up and succeed.

Councillor Quigg, further to the last meeting of Council, on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023, (minute 10 refers) sought clarification on proposals to sell land at the Fitton Hill Housing scheme site, in light of the rising value of the land affected.

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, addressed his question noting that due procedure had been followed in this matter, a fact that had been verified by an independent audit report thereon.

b. Deputy Leader and Housing and Licensing Portfolio

Councillor Arnott stated that a new development of 2- and 3-bedroom houses in the centre of Royton, developed by First Choice Homes Oldham will be available at "affordable rent" as well as shared ownership. Would the Cabinet Member confirm that priority will be given to the many Royton residents who are desperate for a social housing property in the town where they live, or where they come from, and write to me and my colleagues every week.

Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader and Housing and Licensing Portfolio, thanked Councillor Arnott for his question. You have referenced the Former Health Centre site in Royton town centre which has been developed by First Choice Homes Oldham and at the end of September 2023, 14 much needed homes were completed. The development includes five affordable rent properties and nine shared ownership properties. The five affordable rent properties have all been let to families on the housing register and are let on a housing needs basis. The nine shared ownership plots are being sold on first come first served basis by LWC as the chosen agent by First Choice Homes Oldham LWC, and it is understood that some of these properties are still available.

Councillor Holly Harrison noted that she was pleased to see more applications for taxis to be licensed here in Oldham, and wondered whether an update can be given on how many of these applications are taxis that were previously registered outside of Greater Manchester and how does being licensed in Oldham help drivers and passengers?

Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader and Housing and Licensing Portfolio, thanked Councillor Holly Harrison for her question. In June 2023, the Licensing Committee approved various policy changes which have resulted in a significant increase in the number of applications to be a taxi driver.

Before these policy changes we licensed around 1300 drivers. To date, we have received an additional 1342 new driver applications, 484 of which have already been issued after undergoing the relevant checks

In addition to this, we are seeing an increase in vehicles being licensed with the Council with currently another 200 licensed private hire vehicles joining the taxi fleet licensed by Oldham taking the total to 1200. More are expected to follow once their existing licences expire at other authorities.

I believe that this is a positive change for the Borough, it is encouraging Greater Manchester residents who obtained driver licences outside of the area to come back to the Council. As the

regulator this gives us more control over the drivers and vehicles providing a service to our residents.

No driver will receive a licence without going through the relevant checks and no vehicle licence will be granted unless the vehicle meets our stringent safety and emission standards.



c. Deputy Leader and Children and Young People's Portfolio Councillor Gloster asked can the Cabinet Member provide an update on fostering allowances? Has the allowance been increased to offset the impact of inflation and have arrangements been made for backpay?

Councillor Mushtaq, Deputy Leader and Children and Young People's Portfolio, replied that the Council has uplifted all payments to Oldham Foster Carers by 10% in January 2023. This was in recognition of the cost-of-living crisis and the valued work our carers do for Oldham's Looked After Children and Young People.

This payment followed a 4% increase in allowances in 2022 alongside an increase in mileage payments and a one-off payment of £250 to assist fostering households with the cost-of-living payments.

We remain committed to support Oldham Carers and have informed carers that we will review again early next year in preparation for 2024/25.

Councillor Rea advised that she had recently attended a White Ribbon event and had made some useful contacts with people who were able to facilitate training and educational events and she undertook to keep Councillor Mushtaq on developments. Councillor Mushtaq, Deputy Leader and Children and Young People's Portfolio, replied thanking Councillor Rea for her remarks and actions.

Councillor Jenny Harrison asked, could you outline the work that the Complex Safeguarding Hub does with vulnerable young people, and how they support victims of CSE and other complex needs?

Councillor Mushtaq, Deputy Leader and Children and Young People's Portfolio, replied that a key part of the Complex Safeguarding Hub work is working directly with young people who have been deemed as vulnerable to exploitation and/or those young people who have been the victims of exploitation. The support offered to each of the young people open to the service is bespoke. When planning the support offered to the young people, consideration is given to their age, culture, identity, learning needs, background and level and nature of concerns. The support for children and young people who have experienced or are experiencing child exploitation has relational and trauma informed and strength based practice at the core: providing education through direct work sessions, using practical approaches to safety planning through role play or scenarios, conversation based learning and reflection, active safeguarding and disruption, emotional support, achieving best evidence interviews, working towards goals and ambitions, being advocates, and applying flexibility and creativity to try what



works for each individual young person. Issues important to young people are of key focus – supporting them with what they need and aspire to achieve. When the time comes to close a young person to the complex safeguarding hub, we ensure there is continued support for that young person, whether this be through KOGs or the youth service.

The Complex Safeguarding Team is also resourced to a level where it can provide a prevention offer to children and young people within the borough. It is noted that prevention is key, with the team wanting to prevent exploitation wherever possible, it is recognised that this is better than responding to and protecting children after the harm has taken place. As part of the prevention offer there is a wider campaign of increasing awareness, education and training of young people, families, communities, and professionals in a variety of ways but also through our direct one to one case work.

d. Education and Skills Portfolio

Councillor Bishop asked how much was the total figure for the provision of an Alternative Education placement for pupils within the borough and what percentage does this represent of the overall education budget? Can the Cabinet Member detail which schools request the most funding for Alternative Education provision?

Councillor Ali, Education and Skills Portfolio Holder replied that the total cost of alternative provision the Council has commissioned this financial year was £332,880.74. This represented a small proportion of the overall education budget. There is not particular pattern in relation to which schools request alternative provision, as it is determined by the need of the child.

The total cost of alternative provision the Council has commissioned this financial year is £332,880.74.

Councillor Adams asked that following a highly critical Ofsted report in August on the management of SEND provision in Oldham, an Improvement Notice was sent to the council in November. Would the Cabinet Member please outline what specific actions have been completed so far, to address the shortcomings that the report highlighted.

Councillor Ali, Education and Skills Portfolio Holder replied that a joint Ofsted/care quality commission (CQC) area send inspection of the Oldham partnership had taken place between Monday 26 June 2023 to Friday 30 June 2023. Since receipt of the report on 25 July 2023, the local area partnership has been working to address the priority actions and development areas. Change Programme Partnership: Oldham has been selected as part of the SEND and Alternative Provision Change Programme for the North West region. This programme, which includes additional funding from the DfE, will help the partnership improve the quality and timeliness of our Education and Health Care Plans and strengthen alternative provision. This will include additional support around speech and language needs. Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme: Oldham's grant bid has been approved and will bring in around £1,000,000 in additional funding. This will be targeted at SEN support and

early identification. This is timely as the areas identified through the DBV programme, also support the response to the Ofsted/CQC inspection.



**Oldham**  
Council

Councillor Ibrahim asked that with the two 'good' OFSTED reports mentioned in the cabinet report Cllr Ali, can you give an update on how many schools in Oldham are ranked as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'?

Councillor Ali, Education and Skills Portfolio Holder, replied that of 104 schools in Oldham that have been inspected by Ofsted, 89 schools (85.6%) were ranked as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' - as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.

e. Health and Social Care Portfolio

Councillor Hamblett asked does the Cabinet Member think it is fair that if someone is refused a blue badge by the council and then appeals the decision, the same team then resits the application rather than an independent body or members of this council? Will the Cabinet Member agree to review this process and bring forward a truly independent appeals process for our residents in the interest of fairness and transparency?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care replied that the Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for the legislation that sets out the broad framework. This includes:

- the prescribed descriptions of disabled people to whom a badge may be issued - for example, the eligibility criteria
- the maximum fee that can be charged by local authorities for issue of a badge
- the period of issue of a badge
- the grounds for refusal to issue a badge and the grounds to withdraw a badge
- the circumstances in which a badge should be returned to the issuing authority
- the manner in which a badge should be displayed
- the national concessions available to badge holders under the scheme

DfT however does not then have an extended responsibility. Under localism the powers to form and apply the Blue Badge policy sit with the local authority.

Local authorities are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Blue Badge scheme and its enforcement. At Oldham we have a policy based on the criteria and this is applied with fairness and objectivity. There isn't an appeal as such but the provision for an applicant to ask for a review. The review is then undertaken by the council contacting medical professionals. If the review is on grounds that medical is being contested, then we will seek a review from a more senior professional within the NHS.

The council is always happy to look at ways in which it can benchmark its approach and policies to ensure we are Resident Focused, and we will be happy to look at what other GM authorities are doing on the aspect of reviews for consistency.

Councillor Charters asked, having seen the responses given to the COVID Inquiry by those who were high up in government during the pandemic, does the cabinet member agree with me that Oldham was failed by the Johnson Government?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care replied one of the things that people often forget about from the pandemic is that there was about 6 weeks where the government kept Oldham in enhanced lockdown restrictions despite the fact that our neighbours in Rochdale and Tameside had similar covid case numbers to us.

Oldhamers could only have 20 people at a funeral during those six weeks, while families in the rest of Greater Manchester could have 30 people there.

10 people might be a small number but the emotional toll this took on people can't be quantified. If it wasn't hard enough to cope with loss and grief during the pandemic Oldhamers would've then had to sit down and work out which of their family members, they weren't inviting. Simply put, we were forgotten about.

At this point in the proceedings, the meeting was interrupted by a member of the public. The Mayor, as Chair of the meeting, gave repeated warnings.

The meeting was adjourned at 19.59 and reconvened at 20.28, in the Lees Suite.

Council agreed to waive Procedure Rules and to note the outstanding portfolio reports namely reports relating to the Communities and Culture Portfolio Holder, the Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder, the Business, Employment and Enterprise Portfolio Holder and the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Minutes of the Cabinet meetings held 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023, be noted.
2. That the Minutes of the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, held 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023, be noted.
3. That the reports of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members, be noted.

10

**NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS**

**Motion 1: Delivering Children's Services in the community**

Councillor Mushtaq **MOVED** and Councillor Charters **SECONDED** the following Motion:

The Sure Start programme, one of the greatest achievements of the last Labour government, ensured that millions of children received the best possible start in life, giving parents the ability to access childcare, early years learning, health services and family support. In doing so, child poverty was reduced, parents felt supported when returning to work, and thousands were able to become successful parents.

The government has introduced a new model to local authorities, known as Family Hubs, which focus on two areas: a universal 0-19s offer, ensuring that young people get the support they need throughout their childhood and adolescence; and a programme focused on the first 1001 days of a child's life, from pregnancy to age 2. This is a critical time for development, and the interventions made during this time period will help give a child the best start to life.

As we face another year of cuts from central government, the council has sought to improve the services we offer to families out in the districts, refurbishing centres and creating a service based on delivering outcomes in community settings, rather than being anchored to buildings. By creating an agile service, we can deliver the much-needed family support in areas where families are, rather than expecting them to come to us.

This Council notes:

- That since the ending of ringfenced funding for Sure Start centres in 2011, there has been a significant reduction in the availability of children's services across England, resulting in poorer starts for millions of children across the country.
- That since the cuts to Sure Start were implemented, childhood obesity levels have risen and more children are starting school below expected development milestones.
- Despite continued funding cuts from 13 years of Tory government, Oldham Council has continued to deliver services and support families.
- That on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December the Council began consulting on an improved model for delivering children's services in the community, recognising the need for an agile service that is delivered not from static sites, but through outreaching services based in hubs but delivered within a community setting.

This Council resolves to:

- Continue supporting residents through the Family Hubs service, providing a 0-19s universal service across the borough, accessible to all families in Oldham at each hub.
- Work alongside partners in the NHS, Department for Education and VCFSE organisations to ensure a comprehensive offer across the borough, utilising council owned assets, community assets and other suitable locations to ensure that families can access the support they need within their communities.
- Thank council staff, NHS staff and school partners who have aided in the design and delivery of this new model.

This council further resolves to:

- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Department for Education, Members of Parliament and the Mayor of Greater Manchester, highlighting the exceptional work done in designing and delivering this model of children's services despite austerity, and make representations for increased funding to ensure the continued roll out of these vital services are supported well into the future.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council continues supporting residents through the Family Hubs service, providing a 0-19s universal service across the borough, accessible to all families in Oldham at each hub.
2. That the Council works alongside partners in the NHS, Department for Education and VCFSE organisations to ensure a comprehensive offer across the borough, utilising council owned assets, community assets and other suitable locations to ensure that families can access the support they need within their communities.
3. To thank council staff, NHS staff and school partners who have aided in the design and delivery of this new model; and
4. To instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Department for Education, Members of Parliament and the Mayor of Greater Manchester, highlighting the exceptional work done in designing and delivering this model of children's services despite austerity, and make representations for increased funding to ensure the continued roll out of these vital services are supported well into the future.

**Motion 2: Boys Need Bins**

Councillor Brownridge **MOVED** and Councillor Arnott **SECONDED** the following Motion:

This Council notes:

- Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men. 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed, rising to 1 in 4 for Black men. As many as 69% of those treated with surgery may experience urinary incontinence as a result.
- 1 in 25 men aged over 40 will experience some form of urinary leakage every year.
- 1 in 20 men aged 60 or over will experience bowel incontinence in the UK.
- Men who need to dispose of their sanitary waste (including incontinence pads, pouches, stoma, catheter, colostomy, ileostomy waste by-products) often have no direct access to a sanitary bin in male toilets.
- A survey of men living with incontinence reveals that 95% feel anxiety due to a lack of sanitary bins in men's toilets for disposing of pads hygienically.
- Nearly one third of men surveyed have been forced to carry their own waste in a bag.

This Council believes:

- that men should be able to safely and hygienically dispose of incontinence products easily and with dignity wherever they go.
- that men who need to dispose of their sanitary waste should have direct access to a sanitary bin in male toilets.

This Council resolves:



- That the Cabinet Member for Reform and Regeneration should consider as soon as reasonably practicable the provision of at least one sanitary bin in all Council male toilets – both public and in council buildings.
- To encourage other providers of public and workplace toilets in our area to make male sanitary bins available in their facilities.
- To support Prostate Cancer UK's 'Boys need Bins' campaign.
- That the Leader should write on behalf of the Council to our three MPs asking them to support Prostate Cancer UK's 'Boys need Bins' campaign and their request for Government to update any necessary regulations to ensure that 'suitable means for the disposal of sanitary dressings' is provided in all toilets.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Cabinet Member for Reform and Regeneration should consider as soon as reasonably practicable the provision of at least one sanitary bin in all Council male toilets – both public and in council buildings.
2. To encourage other providers of public and workplace toilets in our area to make male sanitary bins available in their facilities.
3. To support Prostate Cancer UK's 'Boys need Bins' campaign.
4. That the Leader of the Council should write on behalf of the Council to our three MPs asking them to support Prostate Cancer UK's 'Boys need Bins' campaign and their request for Government to update any necessary regulations to ensure that 'suitable means for the disposal of sanitary dressings' is provided in all toilets.

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**NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS**

**Motion 1: 20 is Plenty**

Councillor Kenyon MOVED and Councillor Gloster SECONDED the following Motion:

Council notes that:

- Speed limits on Britain's Roads are 60% higher than in Europe.
- More than half of all accident casualties occur on roads with 30mph limits.
- A pedestrian is 7 times more likely to die if they are hit by a vehicle travelling at 30mph than they are at 20mph, rising to 10 times more likely if aged 60 or older.
- Reducing speed limits on residential roads has been found to reduce air pollution, the incidents of accidents, and the numbers of fatalities and serious injuries that result.
- Over 20 million citizens live in local authorities in the UK which have adopted or are adopting a default speed limit of 20mph on residential roads.
- The default speed limit of 20mph has been adopted by other local authorities without the need for the implementation of physical calming measures.

- Road safety experts from 130 countries adopted the 'Stockholm Declaration' recommending 20mph as the preferred default speed limit on residential roads in February 2020, and this was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in August 2020.

Council further recognises that:

- Covid-19 and the challenges that have come with building back from it demonstrate that one of our key concerns must be to address all aspects of public health.
- This should include lowering the default speed of motor vehicles on residential roads to reduce the danger they pose to residents and the pollution they emit.
- Such a measure should be comprehensive and cover all residential roads in the Council Area – unless there are specific and unique exceptions that necessitate a faster speed limit.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Establish an all-group working party to seek to implement a Council-wide 20mph speed limit on residential roads as soon as possible. This should include identifying roads where the lower speed limit may not be appropriate and exploring enforcement measures such as average speed cameras and Community Speedwatch initiatives.
- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the leaders of all other Councils in the region that haven't already implemented 20mph speed limits as the default in their authority area, and to write to Highways England requesting that speeds are reduced on sections of the motorway network in our Council area to tackle pollution.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> AMENDMENT

Councillor Lancaster MOVED and Councillor Byrne SECONDED the following AMENDMENT

Council notes that:

Speed limits on many of our Borough's roads residential and otherwise, are inappropriately high and permit excessive speeds.

Issues with speeding are not limited to residential roads, but all roads across the highway network.

There are benefits to reducing speed limits on residential roads, including reductions in the incidents of accidents, and the numbers of fatalities and serious injuries that result.

Speed limits require the implementation of physical calming measure and active enforcement, namely permanent cameras, otherwise they are largely permissive and general speeds still exceed the limit.

The recent Welsh Government action to introduce default 20mph speed limits across their nation has resulted in great public opposition, with October 2023 polling conducted by Redfield & Wilton Strategies showing that 59% were against the change (only 29% in favour), and more than 450,000 people having signed a petition to the Senedd calling for the new policy to be reversed.

Default 20mph limits risk the perception of arbitrary restrictions being applied on responsible motorists and widespread disobedience with the speed limit; as well as longer-standing traffic generating greater emissions.

20mph zones are most appropriate and effective when implemented around schools, town and village centres, and locations of high pedestrian traffic and strong, local road safety concerns.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Engage with residents in all communities across the Borough to establish locations which may be suitable for lower speed limits, including more 20mph zones which cover residential roads, and roads which are presently of higher and even national speed limits.
2. Urgently review the effectiveness of existing 20mph zones, with a view to strengthening through physical traffic-calming measures and enforcement actions.
3. Demonstrate flexibility in responding to requests for permanent speed cameras, rather than refusing simply on the grounds of rigid criteria.
4. Utilise the recent £544,000 funding award from HM Government to perform a programme of pothole repairs and road improvements, which in turn deliver road safety benefit.

A vote was taken on the 1<sup>st</sup> AMENDMENT which was LOST.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> AMENDMENT

Councillor Goodwin MOVED and Councillor Ibrahim SECONDED the following AMENDMENT

Council notes that:

- Speed limits on Britain's Roads are 60% higher than in Europe.
- More than half of all accident casualties occur on roads with 30mph limits.
- A pedestrian is 7 times more likely to die if they are hit by a vehicle travelling at 30mph than they are at 20mph, rising to 10 times more likely if aged 60 or older.
- Reducing speed limits on residential roads has been found to reduce air pollution, the incidents of accidents, and the numbers of fatalities and serious injuries that result.
- Over 20 million citizens live in local authorities in the UK which have adopted or are adopting a default speed limit of 20mph on residential roads.
- The default speed limit of 20mph has been adopted by other local authorities without the need for the implementation of physical calming measures.
- Road safety experts from 130 countries adopted the 'Stockholm Declaration' recommending 20mph as the preferred default speed limit on residential roads in February 2020, and this was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in August 2020.

Council further recognises that:

- Covid-19 and the challenges that have come with building back from it demonstrate that one of our key concerns must be to address all aspects of public health.
- This should include lowering the default speed of motor vehicles on residential roads to reduce the danger they pose to residents and the pollution they emit.
- Such a measure should be comprehensive and cover all residential roads in the Council Area – unless doing so would not be appropriate.

Council therefore resolves:

- To establish an all-group working party to seek to implement a Council-wide 20mph speed limit on residential roads as soon as practical subject to consultation and cost analysis. This should include identifying roads where the lower speed limit may not be appropriate and exploring enforcement measures such as average speed cameras, in locations determined by TfGM criteria and current national guidelines, and Community Speedwatch initiatives.
- That the all-group working party works with all other Councils in the region that haven't already implemented 20mph speed limits as the default in their authority area as part of the GM wide Vision Zero.

On being put to the Vote the 2<sup>nd</sup> AMENDMENT was CARRIED.

On being put to the Vote the Motion as AMENDED was CARRIED

**RESOLVED:**

Council resolves:

1. To establish an all-group working party to seek to implement a Council-wide 20mph speed limit on residential roads as soon as practical subject to consultation and cost analysis. This should include identifying roads where the lower speed limit may not be appropriate and exploring enforcement measures such as average speed cameras, in locations determined by TfGM criteria and current national guidelines, and Community Speedwatch initiatives.
2. That the all-group working party works with all other Councils in the region that haven't already implemented 20mph speed limits as the default in their authority area as part of the GM wide Vision Zero.

**Motion 2: Community First Aid**

Councillor Woodvine MOVED and Councillor Lancaster SECONDED the following Motion:

St. John's Ambulance is the country's first aid and health response charity. From helping young people become the health care professionals of tomorrow, to their world class training, St. John's empowers people of all ages with lifesaving skills. They deliver compassion and care as ambulance crews, at marathons

and festivals, in hospitals, and through a range of inspiring youth programmes.

St. John's Ambulance has always supported NHS Trusts in periods of high demand. During the Covid pandemic, volunteers stepped forward to serve the nation in the biggest peace time deployment in 140 years delivering 1.7 million hours in local communities.

Communities have a vital role in the chain of survival and First Aid is at the heart of every community.

Whether it's a member of the public providing CPR after attending a workplace First Aid training course, a young person learning how to treat bleeding as a cadet, or a community first responder treating someone who has experienced a fall in their home. This is community First Aid saving lives.

As the nation's ambulance auxiliary, St. John's Ambulance adds resilience to ambulance trusts by treating and transporting patients, responding to emergency call outs whilst reducing waiting times. St. John's Ambulance also delivers community operations focussing on the health needs of communities treating over 4,000 patients in 2022. These services include:

- Falls Response Services: supporting the elderly in their homes, providing the best quality care to avoid hospital admissions.
- Night-Time Economy: offering safe spaces in town centres on Friday and Saturday nights when the impact of intoxication is prevalent. This service has a 19% reduction in ambulance responses required.

As a trusted auxiliary partner to the NHS and local communities, St. John's Ambulance is committed to working with Councillors to utilise the potential of volunteers to improve patient outcomes in communities and reduce NHS pressures.

In January 2023, the *Three Ways to Save a Life* campaign, run by SJA and BBC Radio Manchester, came to an end with a final figure of 16,120 people trained across the 10 Boroughs of Greater Manchester in life saving first aid skills.

Following the fifth anniversary of the Manchester Arena bombing, the two organisations teamed to take these skills across Greater Manchester to local people and organisations, through a mix of public training sessions and on-demand training including, delivering cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and using a defibrillator, treating severe bleeding and catastrophic haemorrhages, and treating someone who is choking.

This Council notes that St. John's Ambulance believes in empowering communities to respond to health emergencies and ensures everyone gets the help they need in a crisis by:

- Responding: as volunteers and a trusted auxiliary to the nation's health service.
- Educating: to inspire every generation to have confidence to provide First Aid.
- Discovering: through our services on how we lead standards in community First Aid.



Therefore, this Council commits to support the vision for Community First Aid by:

1. Raising awareness of the importance of learning First Aid by sending a delegation of senior Elected Members and Officers of the Council to visit our local St. John's Ambulance Unit(s) and supporting / promoting the vision across social media and the local printed media platforms; particularly emphasising that anybody in Oldham can access free First Aid training by SJA.
2. Recognising voluntary sector organisations such as St. John's Ambulance within local resilience arrangements to support emergency preparedness and crisis response by commissioning the Chief Executive Officer and Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care to survey and utilise the skills of Oldham's local and voluntary sector to support community response to local emergencies as recommended by the NHS Volunteering Taskforce. This can be done through supporting voluntary sector representation on local resilience forms and inclusion within emergency preparedness, resilience, and response exercises at local level.
3. Engaging with auxiliary partners to utilise the potential of volunteers to respond to community health emergencies, improve patient outcomes and reduce NHS pressures; working with the voluntary sector to strengthen first aid resilience by empowering communities through access to first aid training and equipment to improve health outcomes and help save lives.
4. Empowering young people to strengthen community resilience by supporting the expansion of St. John's Ambulance NHS Cadets and Young Responder programmes.
5. Advocating for a Statutory Right to Volunteer by writing to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom calling on the Government to introduce legislation to enable volunteers of all ages to deploy at times of national and local emergency. An effective system would enable volunteers to request a set period of leave to deploy at times of crisis.
6. Requesting the Leader of the Council, as the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Member for Equalities & Communities, to circulate this to her colleagues at GMCA so that they may seek to commit to these actions in their Local Authorities too.

On being put to the Vote the Motion was CARRIED

RESOLVED:

That the Council commits to support the vision for Community First Aid by:

1. Raising awareness of the importance of learning First Aid by sending a delegation of senior Elected Members and Officers of the Council to visit our local St. John's Ambulance Unit(s) and supporting/promoting the vision across social media and the local printed media platforms; particularly emphasising that anybody in Oldham can access free First Aid training by SJA.

2. Recognising voluntary sector organisations such as St. John's Ambulance within local resilience arrangements to support emergency preparedness and crisis response by commissioning the Chief Executive Officer and Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care to survey and utilise the skills of Oldham's local and voluntary sector to support community response to local emergencies as recommended by the NHS Volunteering Taskforce. This can be done through supporting voluntary sector representation on local resilience forms and inclusion within emergency preparedness, resilience, and response exercises at local level.
3. Engaging with auxiliary partners to utilise the potential of volunteers to respond to community health emergencies, improve patient outcomes and reduce NHS pressures; working with the voluntary sector to strengthen first aid resilience by empowering communities through access to first aid training and equipment to improve health outcomes and help save lives.
4. Empowering young people to strengthen community resilience by supporting the expansion of St. John's Ambulance NHS Cadets and Young Responder programmes.
5. Advocating for a Statutory Right to Volunteer by writing to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom calling on the Government to introduce legislation to enable volunteers of all ages to deploy at times of national and local emergency. An effective system would enable volunteers to request a set period of leave to deploy at times of crisis.
6. Requesting the Leader of the Council, as the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Member for Equalities & Communities, to circulate this to her colleagues at GMCA so that they may seek to commit to these actions in their Local Authorities too.

### **Motion 3: The Protection and Safeguarding of Children**

Councillor Rea MOVED and Councillor Hindle SECONDED the following Motion:

The protection and safeguarding of our children should be a priority for all of us. Reviews on historical CSE have been in front of us before. Regular requests for independent Inquiries continue to be refused.

Whilst we continue to seek justice for survivors of historical CSE we cannot ignore the fact that it is still happening now, that grooming is still happening and that grooming gangs are active. The Leader of the Council has previously stated that CSE has and in all probability will continue to occur in the Borough.

Council notes that:

Information and knowledge are the most powerful tools that we have. We need to educate our children of the signs of grooming and showing them who or where to go with any concerns. We need to give them the feeling that they can report anything in complete confidence. Being pro-active and highlighting this issue could prevent more children from becoming victims/survivors.

This issue is above any party-political leanings. Together we

need to eradicate this corruption which lies within our society.



Council resolves to:

- Commit to facilitating relevant sessions across the Borough
- Bring together all departments within the Council and work with other external bodies to deliver specific sessions on CSE and grooming.
- Work with partners to formulate and develop a straightforward and clear package which will be delivered to all Year 7 students in the Borough every year as a matter of course.
- Work towards rolling sessions out to Year 6 students.
- Minute the meetings of the Elected Members cross-party steering group, make them available to all members and to the general public via the council website. Additionally provide a quarterly report detailing any actions and progress made.

#### AMENDMENT

Councillor Mushtaq MOVED and Councillor Ali SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

The protection and safeguarding of our children should be a priority for all of us. After the Independent assurance review into safeguarding practices in Oldham led by Malcolm Newsam CBE and Gary Ridgeway, the council committed to ensuring that it would do whatever is necessary to keep children and young people safe in the borough.

Whilst we continue to seek justice for survivors of historical CSE we cannot ignore the fact that it is still happening now, that grooming is still happening and that grooming gangs are active. The Leader of the Council acknowledged the reality that the abhorrent and disgusting crime of child sexual exploitation continued to occur in borough, and that all political parties should work together to ensure that potential victims can seek and receive support and justice.

Council notes that:

Information and knowledge are the most powerful tools that we have. We need to educate our children of the signs of grooming and show them who or where to go with any concerns. We need to give them the feeling that they can report anything in complete confidence. Being pro-active and highlighting this issue could prevent more children from becoming victims/survivors.

This issue is above any party-political leanings. Together we need to eradicate this corruption which lies within our society.

Council resolves to:

- Continue to facilitate relevant sessions across the Borough
- Continue to bring together all departments within the Council and work with other external bodies to deliver specific sessions on CSE and grooming.
- Continue to create age-appropriate materials and

sessions that are made available to all schools in Oldham, both Primary and Secondary.

On being put to the Vote the AMENDMENT was CARRIED.

On being put to the Vote the Motion as AMENDED was CARRIED

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council continues to facilitate relevant sessions across the Borough.
2. That the Council continues to bring together all departments within the Council and work with other external bodies to deliver specific sessions on CSE and grooming.
3. That the Council continues to create age-appropriate materials and sessions that are made available to all schools in Oldham, both Primary and Secondary.

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**CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: ELECTED MEMBER STEERING GROUP - ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Mushtaq SECONDED a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which asked for consideration of the Annual Report from the Elected Member Steering Group on Child Sexual Exploitation and to agree proposals to change the terms of reference for the Steering Group to include all constituted political groups and any elected members with portfolio or shadow portfolio responsibilities for children's services.

Following the publication of the independent assurance review into historic safeguarding practice, Oldham Council had established a cross party Elected member Steering Group on Child Sexual Exploitation.

The Steering Group committed, as part of its terms of reference to provide a summary of its activity to Full Council on an annual basis. The submitted report sought to present that summary to Full Council, as detailed at Appendix A.

The report also sought to agree changes to the terms of reference, established in 2022, to reflect the changing political landscape within Oldham Council and to ensure representation from all political groups. These proposed changes were outlined in a proposed updated terms of reference at Appendix B.

**RESOLVED**

1. That Council formally receives the Annual Report of the Elected Member Steering Group on Child Sexual Exploitation detailing the assurance work undertaken in the last twelve months.
2. That Council agree the proposed changes to the Steering Group's terms of reference to:
  - a. Extend the membership of the group to include two representatives from each political group,

- b. That the two group representatives on the Steering Group will be the Group Leader and, where the role exists within that group, the member with portfolio or shadow portfolio responsibilities for children and young people.
- c. Where no such role exists within a group the Group Leader will determine the second member.

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### **REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE ON COMMITTEES**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED a report of the Director of Legal Services which advised that the Council has received notification that three Members of the Council wish henceforth to be known as the Oldham Group, further to Regulation 8 (1) of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and under Section 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The three members are Councillors Ghafoor, Irfan and Wahid and Councillor Ghafoor is to be Leader of the Group with Councillor Wahid as Deputy Leader

In light of this the Council was asked to review the political composition of committees and to note the composition of the political groups as previously notified under Regulation 8 (1) of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and under Section 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

The establishment of the new group means that the Conservative Group on the Council was reduced from 11 to eight and the Liberal Democrat Group, with 10 members, were the Council's main opposition Group. Their Shadow Portfolio positions were detailed at Appendix 1, of the report.

#### **RESOLVED That:**

1. The composition of the political groups, as shown in paragraph 1.1 of the report, be noted.
2. The number of seats on the various Committees for the remainder of the 2023/24 Municipal Year, as detailed in paragraph 1.5 of the report, be approved.
3. Council confirms the allocation of seats to the political groups and makes appointments to fill the seats in accordance with Sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as far as is practicable, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, including those Committees that are not strictly politically balanced, namely the four Scrutiny Boards.
4. Any outstanding appointments, where Group are entitled to a committee seat, be delegated to the Chief Executive in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group.
5. The Liberal Democrat Group Shadow Cabinet positions be noted.
6. Any outstanding appointments to be delegated to the Chief Executive to determine, in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group.



**CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024/25**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED a report of the Director of Legal Services which sought approval of the draft Calendar of Meetings for the 2024/2025 Municipal Year.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The Council's Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2024/2025 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.

**UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED a report of the Director of Legal Services, which informed members of actions taken following the meeting of the Council on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 to all Council members.

Resolved:

That the actions regarding motions and issues from the meeting of the Council on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 be noted.

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR REVIEW REPORT 2023-24**

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah 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 2023/24 and which also provided a comparison of performance against the 2022/24 Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators.

The Council was required to consider the performance of the Treasury Management function in order to comply with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2021). This submitted report provided an additional update and included the new requirement in the 2021 Code, mandatory from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. This report therefore sets out the key Treasury Management issues for Members' information and review and outlines:

- An economic update for the first half of the year of 2023/24.
- A review and updates of the Council's current treasury management position
- Council Borrowing.
- Treasury Investment Activity.
- Treasury Performance for the first six months.
- Treasury Management Prudential Indicators.

The Audit Committee is the council's body charged with the scrutiny of Treasury Management activities for Oldham Council, and therefore considered and approved the contents of the Half Year Report at its meeting of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023. The Committee was therefore content to commend the report to Cabinet. As

such, Cabinet, at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023, approved the content of the report and was content to commend it to Council.



Council was, therefore, requested to approve the Treasury Management Half Year Report 2023/24 to ensure full compliance with the Code.

### **RESOLVED**

That Council approves:

1. The Treasury Management Half Year Report 2023/24.
2. The proposed revisions to the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit as presented at paragraph 2.6.9 of the submitted report.

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### **CODE OF CONDUCT AMENDMENT**

Councillor H. Harrison MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED a report of the Director of Legal that sought Council's consideration of a proposed amendment to the Code of Conduct.

The Council have agreed a Members Code of Conduct which has been re-confirmed at an earlier meeting. At its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023, Council had resolved to develop and adopt a mandatory duty to report safeguarding concerns, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, into the Members Code of Conduct. Council was therefore asked to consider the following proposed paragraph for insertion into the code of conduct at paragraph 11, which has been recommended by the Standards Committee, (at its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023) - "If any member has any safeguarding concerns, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, in connection with any person, it is the duty of the member to report these concerns to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)".

### **RESOLVED**

That the proposed amendment to the Code of Conduct be approved.

The meeting started at 6.000pm and ended at 9.55pm