

## Portfolio Report

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Peter Dean  
Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture

---

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities.

### **Customer Services:**

Oldham Council has been allocated £2,419 million by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver the sixth round of Household Support Fund (HSF) from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025. The scheme is designed to support vulnerable households in most need with the cost of essentials and supplements the council's wider ongoing work to support residents at risk of cost of living and to address poverty. Payments will be available to residents who can't afford to heat their homes; food vouchers will be given to families who have children eligible for free school meals over Christmas; £20,000 will be given to Oldham Food Bank to help stock their shelves; and £200,000 will be distributed to charities, community groups and faith organisations to help them buy provide warm clothes and essentials to people who use their services.

We're also urging Oldham pensioners to check if they are entitled to pension credit so they can get more money – and receive the winter fuel payment. Full details of Oldham's HSF scheme is available on the council website and a winter communications plan has been developed to share the key messages about the support available.

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) launched Right Care Right Person in September 2024. We have worked closely with GMP to ensure that police call handlers can access information about council services to signpost callers appropriately. Council Customer Services staff have been briefed on the changes. Our dashboards show a low volume of Right Care Right Person calls to the Council switchboard. We will continue to monitor volumes and impact moving forwards.

### **District Community Councils and Neighbourhood Working:**

The opening of Royton Town Hall has been a great success, with the building now providing a base for partners in the area to come together and work collaboratively for the benefit of local communities. This includes the newly refurbished Royton Library which opened its door to the public on Saturday 14th September. To date the library has welcomed 2,706 visitors with 127 new members, and 1736 books issued. As well as providing this back-office partnership space, the town hall will also host a variety of services for local people to access, with partners such as Tameside, Oldham and Glossop Mind, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Your Health Oldham joining the Council services on offer.

More broadly, the resident offer from the hubs across all five Districts continues to grow in strength, with around 1400 residents accessing support closer to home. Supplementing this, the team have organised and supported 11 District Marketplace events in the last 3 months, with hundreds of people.

---

### **Sport and Leisure:**

A place based and whole system approach to supporting people to Move More formerly known as the Local Pilot, 2018- 2024. Funding previously secured for GM / Oldham to 'Impact on the ways of working, to break down the barriers that stop people to Move More / be more active. Two geographical places initially selected due to data and local insight / knowledge – Glodwick & Failsworth

Community led approaches / involving communities / building relationships & trust have been at the heart of what we have done so far. This has led to increased community engagement & empowerment through trusted leaders, champions & groups. There have also been changes in the ways of working including increased collaboration and interconnection across the system.

Future: We (GM / Oldham) have made a submission to Sport England to expand and deepen the work for 2025-28 and have heard positive news that the board have agreed to our submission and plans. Awaiting official sign off and the value of funding. Our plans are to use the learning so far to expand from two districts to all five, and to align with the PBI model. To use this approach to improve physical activity & wellbeing levels to tackle an area in each district which faces high levels of inactivity & inequalities.

### **Community Safety and Stronger Communities:**

The Community Safety Service has continued to work closely with partners to identify individuals engaging in Criminal and Anti-Social Behaviour which is blighting their community. These behaviours are being challenged through informal measures including warning letters, warning interviews and referrals to support services, or via more formal legal measures where appropriate. Overall Crime in Oldham is down this last period.

During National Hate Crime Awareness week in October, the following activities were delivered: A Microaggression Matters session by Communities Inc was commissioned for delivery to Saddleworth School pastoral staff (this is the exploration of early and sometimes unconscious expressions of what could become prejudice, discrimination and hate if not tackled). Hate Crime awareness raising and engagement with Asylum Seekers and Refugees; Delivery of the 'Hate and how to effectively challenge' session to school Governors; Hate Crime awareness raising and engagement with women from the SAWN Project.

The Home Office Prevent duty training 'Learn how to support people susceptible to radicalisation' has become mandatory training for all Council staff. The training will ensure that staff understand what Prevent is, how it applies to their roles and identify the emotions and behaviours that might make someone susceptible to radicalisation.

### **Heritage, Libraries and Arts:**

StoryFest: - Launch of our first children's literature festival inspiring 4,300 children to read and write creatively.

Sustainable Library Cards - HLA ran a competition over the summer to find an illustration for our new sustainable library cards. A panel of judges selected two designs from over 200 entries. The new cards are manufactured in the UK, lightweight and use less ink and powder for print drying than standard plastic library cards. They will begin to be issued to library members this autumn.

A short '*Introduction to Technical Theatre*' course for young people aged 13 – 19

In partnership with Oldham Coliseum, HLA supported the delivery of the Khushi Festival at Oldham Library which attracted over 2,000 visitors and Oldham Theatre Workshop delivered an Introduction to Technical Theatre Course for young people aged 13-19, leading to AQA qualifications.

---

**Recommendations:** Council is requested to note the report.