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COUNCIL
06/11/2024 at 6.00 pm



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

Councillors: Adams, Al-Hamdani, M Ali, Z Ali, Arnott, Aslam, Azad, Ball, Bashforth, Bishop, Brownridge, Byrne, Charters, Chowhan, Cosgrove, Davis, Dean, Ghafoor, Goodwin, Hamblett, Harkness, Harrison, Hince, Hindle, Hobin, Hughes, Hurley, A Hussain, F Hussain, J. Hussain, S. Hussain, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Islam, Jabbar, Kenyon, Kouser, Lancaster, Malik, Marland, McLaren, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Nasheen, Navesey, Quigg, Rustidge, Shah, Sharp, Sheldon, Shuttleworth, Sykes, Taylor, Wahid, Wilkinson, Williamson and Woodvine

1 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Akhtar.

2 TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 11TH SEPTEMBER 2024 BE SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on 11th September 2024, 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

The Mayor advised Council that Motion 4, at agenda item 11 (Honouring Veterans) has been withdrawn from the agenda, at the request of Councillor Wilkinson, the Mover of the Motion.

5 TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

With respect to agenda items 10 and 11, the Mayor advised members that further to paragraphs 12.4.1 and 12.4.3 of the Council's Procedure Rules, there would be:

- a. A change of Mover and Seconder to the second administration motion, at item 10 (Supporting Kinship Carers). The motion will now be moved by Cllr Shaid Mushtaq and seconded by Cllr Lisa Navesey.
- b. A change of Seconder to item 11 Motion 3 (immediate Ceasefire in Gaza); the Motion will now be Seconded by Cllr Wahid.

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

There were no Petitions for this meeting of the Council to consider.

7

YOUTH COUNCIL

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

8

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Question from Imran Ghaffar:

Like many residents in Oldham, I am excited to learn more about the 480-space sixth form college, a collaboration between Eton College and Star Academies, being built on the site of the outdoor market and car park.

As both of us are practicing Muslims, will the leader of the Council confirm that the school will have an Islamic ethos and educate our young children according to the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)? Will it be for just boys and those of Islamic faith only as some have suggested?

Councillor Mohon Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills replied, that following various announcements from the Government, we understand the financial challenges they are facing and we support the need to review projects and their costs, particularly in light of the improvements that are needed to existing school buildings.

Every Oldham child, no matter where they live or whatever their background, is entitled to the opportunities which can help them fulfil their potential. The Eton Star Oldham proposal supports us in achieving this ambition. We're confident in the difference this project will make to the lives of children and young people in Oldham and we'll continue to make this case to the government.

Eton Star Oldham would focus on admitting bright young students who aspire to attend top universities, regardless of their background. My goal is for the school to welcome many students on free school meals, looked-after children, those from disadvantaged areas, and those who would be the first in their families to attend university. This will give more children in Oldham the chance to achieve great outcomes, and I'm incredibly proud we've been able to secure this for our community.

The college would offer a focused curriculum with academically demanding subjects. Students will start with four A-levels, with some choosing to focus on three A-levels later to fit their personal progression paths. Alongside A-levels, all students will study for a 'diploma.' They will also have access to Eton College's extensive network of teachers, alumni, scholars, partners, and educational experts.

Eton Star Oldham would be open to both girls and boys from all faiths, as well as those with no faith.

Whilst we await the outcome of the free school review we will continue to do all we can to ensure all children and young people in Oldham have the best start in life.

2. Question from Peter Webb:

We live in a Christian country with an established Church and the Sovereign as the head of that Church.

We are a tolerant nation with many faiths. Sadly, the personal is becoming the political.

Whilst the Council promotes the lighting up of the Civic Centre for those of the Islamic faith, like was done on the 15th September 2024, it does feel like others are conspicuous by their absence, due in part perhaps to the Leader of the Council conflating personal religious beliefs with those Civic duties that treat all equally.

So will the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, Christian celebration of Christmas & Easter, and Hindu festival of Divali be lit up in lights?

Councillor Dean, Cabinet Memembr for Thriving Communities and Culture replied that Oldham is proud to celebrate our diverse communities, and we recognise festivals, important dates in different faiths, and other significant events throughout the year. For example, we raise the England flag for St George's Day, hold a rainbow parade to celebrate our LGBTQ+ communities, and mark occasions like Bonfire Night with a fireworks display. This weekend, we'll honour Remembrance Sunday with a Festival of Remembrance, including poppy projections on our civic tower. And of course, we'll have festive lights around the town as we approach Christmas.

Our approach is to celebrate, remember, and reflect together on the things that make Oldham a wonderful place. We work to bring people together, ensuring that all our communities – of every faith and none – feel respected and valued.

3. Question from Hannah Roberts:

Covid and flu vaccinations are now available for people over 65 & in target groups. I have heard that take up is lower this year. Can the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Social Care give us any information about progress in Oldham? What can the Council do to promote these vaccinations that protect against what can be a serious disease & also save valuable NHS resources by keeping people out of hospital?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, replied, thanking Hannah Roberts for her question noting that as we enter the flu season, Oldham Council staff are working with the NHS and other partners to provide clear messages about the importance of all vaccinations, including the flu and Covid-19 vaccines. Flu is highly contagious and can be very serious. Getting the flu vaccine doesn't just protect you; it also helps prevent the flu from spreading to others who may be more vulnerable. By reducing the spread of illnesses like flu, we can help reduce hospital admissions and ease pressure on health services.

To support this, we're making every contact count in our work with care home staff and other adult social care providers to raise awareness of vaccinations. We're also sharing information through newsletters, poster campaigns, and opportunities to talk directly with the community, such as wellbeing talks at leisure

centres. Health practitioners delivering vaccines in Oldham have access to workshops on how to discuss vaccine hesitancy positively with residents.

In addition, we're working closely with schools and our immunisation partners to ensure consistent messaging, so every parent in Oldham has the chance to consider flu vaccination for their children.

As of 17th October, Greater Manchester figures show that around 20% of those eligible had received their winter booster.

4. Question from Brian Kelly

The Saddleworth Community Hydro Project recently celebrated its 10th Anniversary and generates enough sustainable electricity to power about 100 homes via the national grid, with an annual saving of 170 tonnes of CO₂. Oldham has a good track record of delivering and supporting green projects and pioneering action to move towards net zero carbon production. Could the Cabinet Member responsible summarise progress on implementing the Council's Green New Deal Strategy?

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader and the Cabinet member for Value for Money and Sustainability, replied thanking Mr Kelly for his question and for recognising Oldham's strong track record in supporting green technologies and initiatives.

Oldham's pioneering Green New Deal Strategy was adopted in March 2020. Since then, the Council has been working hard, despite challenges, to put in place a delivery programme that will guide the borough to Net Zero.

Although the Council has limited internal resources for this important work due to ongoing financial pressures, we've still managed to secure over £12 million in grant funding for various projects. This funding supports initiatives like decarbonising public buildings, installing LED lighting at Oldham Leisure Centre, creating Oldham's Low Carbon Heat Network, and participating in the GMCA/DESNZ Local Net Zero Accelerator programme to form an Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership.

This new partnership is expected to bring in the investment and resources needed to achieve Net Zero. Once we have our Strategic Energy Partner on board, there will be a focus on Community-Led Energy Planning, ensuring that residents have a say in how low-carbon initiatives benefit their neighbourhoods. The partnership should be fully operational by spring 2026, with key projects like the heat network following soon after.

Another exciting project is the Wrigley Head Solar Farm, which the Council is funding. This project will reduce carbon emissions, generate revenue for the Council, and bring ecological benefits to a former industrial landfill site. Construction is set to begin before Christmas 2024 and should be completed by spring/summer 2025.

5. Question from Jenny Harrison:

Oldham Council has done a really good job renovating Royton Town Hall and Library which have just reopened. On a recent visit, I was very impressed with the sympathetic renovation. Could the responsible Cabinet Member explain what services will be available from the town hall and how local people can make best use of the building.

The library is free to join and borrow books from - what else is on offer.

Councillor Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture replied thanking Jenny for her question and confirming that the following services will be available from Royton Town Hall:

- Mind – offering appointments for mental health support
- Citizens Advice – offering drop-in sessions, as well as appointments for more in-depth support
- Early Help – drop-in support for local families
- Your Health Oldham – appointments for Stop Smoking
- Guinness Housing drop-in surgeries

A number of other partners are currently confirming arrangements, and we will be announcing these elements of support in the near future.

In addition to book borrowing, residents can access IT services including online basics course to support with digital skills.

Other regular activities include Bounce and Rhyme sessions for families with children under 5, Baby Art Studio and the Royton Readers Groups.

Programme of events (author events, family activities and local history talks etc) will be scheduled throughout the year to tie in with local, regional and national campaigns.

6. Question from Dominic Wall:

The work at the Old Library has been underway for a while. Could the Leader of the Council confirm what the building will be used for and when it will be open for use? Does Cllr Shah know what social value – for example Apprenticeships and local jobs – has been added because of the project?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Building a Better Oldham replied thanking Dominic for his question and stating that she was pleased to visit the building yesterday with Cabinet colleagues to see the progress and to hear directly about the benefits for Oldham's residents and communities through our partnership with Tilbury Douglas. We expect the Old Library building to open next summer. It will offer a great mix of creative, cultural, and community spaces along with civic and public services. This includes improved facilities for community groups to work together and for those needing more space for their activities. There will be extra gallery space on the top floor, connected by a bridge to the existing gallery, as well as a new Council Chamber, Mayoral chamber, rooms for elected members, and committee meeting rooms.

The Old Library project has provided £9.2m in opportunities for local suppliers and trades, and it has generated £7.7m in social value. This includes 67% of the contracted workforce being local, 612 weeks of apprenticeship training, and 19 new jobs created.

Tilbury Douglas has also contributed 263 hours of educational activities, attended career events at Oldham College, supported St Mary's Primary School's safety poster campaign, and helped at Oldham's job fair with Job Centre Plus, as well as Positive Steps.

In addition, £9,926 has been donated to charities, including the Wall of Kindness, Oldham Working Wardrobe, and the Community Wardrobe. They've also supported Easter and Christmas donation drives for Oldham Council's Christmas toy appeal for children in social care.

7. Question from Paul Scoltock:

Can the cabinet member give an update on the work being done by the Council and TGFM to reduce antisocial parking on Union Street?

Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet member for Don't Trash Oldham replied thanking Paul for his question and agreeing that this matter was a real issue.

We're currently developing plans to introduce Oldham's first Red Route Corridor (a "no stopping" zone), and Union Street has been chosen as one of the first areas to benefit. On Red Routes, stopping is only allowed for emergency services vehicles. Blue Badge holders and taxis (Hackney Carriages) can also stop briefly to let passengers get in or out but are not allowed to wait. Unlike traditional yellow line restrictions, Red Routes can be monitored and enforced with camera technology, which serves as a stronger deterrent against illegal parking.

Over the next few months, we'll consult on this plan and advertise the Traffic Regulation Orders, with the goal of implementing the scheme early in the next financial year, once funding from TfGM is secured.

8. Question from Candida Garvey:

With regard to our council tax payments - is part of this money Residents of Oldham pay (apart from those who use their home as a place of worship?) Maintaining roads, pavements and street lighting, and cleaning your streets?

This is a simple yes or no answer?

The answer is quite clearly NO. Our villages. Side street have never ever looked so tired and scruffy.

Next question.... Where is our public money going? Why have we no weed contract? Sending out workers with a bit of weed spray once in several years is not cutting it.

We want answers and we want the pride putting back into our villages. Lees/Springhead/ Grotton totally neglected.

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Value for Money and Sustainability replied Thank you for your

question, Candida. First, I'd like to clarify that the idea that people who use their home as a place of worship don't pay council tax is simply not true. There are exemptions that may reduce council tax – for example, for those on a low income – but religion is not a factor.

To address the substance of your question: council tax funds a vast range of services. According to the Local Government Association, councils provide over 800 services to residents, from maintaining roads, pavements, and street lighting to much more.

Council tax also supports critical services, such as social care for older adults, support for looked-after children, and emergency and temporary accommodation for those in need. While these services are under immense pressure, we remain committed to essential services like street cleaning, road maintenance, and preserving our wonderful green spaces. We know a cleaner and greener borough is important to residents, that's why this Labour administration launched our Don't Trash Oldham campaign a number of years ago. Our staff are out across the borough every day, in all weathers, cleaning up and making environmental improvements.

But they are a small team and we can't be everywhere at once. Everyone can do their bit to help – from disposing of their waste properly to joining a local litter pick. But Don't Trash Oldham is not just about fly-tipping and waste - it's about improving the whole environment. Throughout the campaign we've continued to listen to residents and that's why we've recently launched a new boroughwide operation to clean all of our 47,500 roadside gulleys. We've taken the feedback on board and getting on with the job.

All this work is part of our aim to get the basics right and ensure everyone lives in a cleaner, greener place. If there are specific areas you'd like us to look at, please feel free to reach out, and we'll address them as soon as possible.

The Mayor advised that any unanswered questions would be published to the Council's website, with written answers, in due course.

9

QUESTIONS TO LEADER AND CABINET

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

- a. Councillor Shah, Leader and Building a Better Oldham Portfolio – including the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held 19th August 2024 and 16th September 2024; the Minutes of the meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 12th July 2024 and 27th September 2024 and the Minutes of the meeting of the AGMA Executive Board held on 27th September 2024.

Councillor Sykes, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Question 1: [IX Wireless](#)

Thank you, Mr Mayor,

People across Oldham Borough have been left feeling ignored and angry with regards to the situation with IX masts – not least in Shaw, Crompton and Royton.



The communication with residents has been woeful by this company. None-existent in many cases. The first people know is if a notice pasted on a lamp post.

You can then respond to the sham consultation – I am not aware of one proposal being amended following constructive suggestions from residents, businesses or councillors.

When you don't communicate, you make the disruption worse for people. And it leads to the resentment we've seen. This is all completely or nearly avoidable with proper communication.

So will the Leader please fully explain to the Council, what the current situation with IX Wireless's highways licenses is?

On what basis was the permit revoked?

Will she commit to proactively informing councillors and members of the public - **ahead of time** – as to when the permit will be reinstated?

And will she write to the Technology Minister, Chris Bryant MP, to ask that companies are required to share broadband infrastructure where possible in order to minimise disruption for residents? Something the law says but I see no evidence of this happening anywhere in our Borough.

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that she understood Councillor Sykes' concerns regarding this matter and she undertook to write to the Technology Minister, Chris Bryan MP, as suggested by Councillor Sykes.

Question 2: Eton Star College

Councillor Sykes asked his second question regarding the Eton Star College. At the last question time I asked the Leader why she thought the Eton Star 6th Form Oldham project was necessary.

It's not a surprise that I and many others fail to be convinced...

But it seems that the new Secretary of State for Education was even less impressed, because since we last met, Bridget Phillipson has paused plans for the opening of 44 new state schools – including those backed by Eton.

So, we can now add the Labour Secretary of State to the list of people who disagree with the Leader that Eton Star is the right thing for Oldham Borough. That list includes:

- The National Education Union.
- Teaching professionals, parents and pupils in Oldham who have never been consulted.
- And even the Council's own officers, who told Children's Scrutiny Committee in March that Eton Star would not help bridge the post-16 gap we have in Oldham Borough.

So, can I ask the Leader... what is her plan if her own Government decides she is wrong... and decides to mothball the Eton Star project?

Also, what is the current value of the Tommyfield Market site and is the true market value of the site going to be paid to the council or are we gifting it to Eton?

The Leader may not have that figure to hand - and if not I happy she writes to me with it, but she must know if we are being paid or gifting the land?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that she still wholeheartedly supported the Eton Star project and that she would, on behalf of the Council, be making appropriate representations to the Secretary of State for Education regarding this matter. With regard to the value of the Tommyfield Market site in Oldham, Councillor Shah undertook to provide Councillor Sykes with a written response to his enquiry.

Question from Councillor Sheldon, Leader of the Conservative Group:

Thank you, Mr Mayor

Last week, the new Labour. government unveiled its budget, promising economic stability and certainty. However, for small businesses in Oldham and across the whole country, the measures outlined by the Chancellor could very well lead to instability and uncertainty about their business' future.

Small businesses will be burdened with additional financial pressures due to this budget, especially with both the minimum wage and employer's National Insurance contributions rising.

The vast majority of Oldham's businesses are small businesses with only a handful of workers. They are the lifeblood of our borough. Unfortunately, these are businesses that already face the pressure of the cost-of-living crisis, and Labour's budget has only added to their struggles.

What this risks is that businesses will either not take on new staff or potentially even let employees go. The knock-on effects of this should be obvious, and we should be working to avoid the impact of any businesses going under or laying off staff.

My question is this: What is this council going to do to help those small businesses who will be impacted, and may be put at risk, by the Labour government's budget?



Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council replied that the proposals in the Chancellor's budget would offer robust support to small businesses and provide the right circumstances in which they can operate successfully. In addition, the Council was committed to providing and supporting large-scale infrastructure projects that would provide employment opportunities for local people. The Council was actively engaging with local organisations in this regard, including with the Federation of Small Businesses.

Question from Councillor Ghafoor, Leader of the Oldham Group
Councillor Ghafoor asked if MUSE Developments Limited, or Oldham Council, had received confirmation for the major development and infrastructure work that is due to be carried out in Oldham town centre?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council replied that the Council is working with MUSE and other developers to promote the development of Oldham's town centre area, to make it a better place to live and work in.

b. Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader and Decent Homes Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor McLaren - How is the Planning Department coping with the numbers of Planning Applications being submitted and does the Council know how Oldham will benefit from the additional resources for Planning Officers and developing skills announced in last week's budget?

Councillor Taylor replied, stating that the Council welcomes the Government's announcement to create roles for 300 additional graduate and apprentice planners mentioned in the budget last week, as any such investment in skilled planning resource is very much welcomed. There is a growing shortage of skilled planners in the UK, as fewer young people are choosing to go into the profession, so any move to encourage more young people to choose planning as a career will be positive. We anticipate more information being shared with all local authorities over the coming weeks.

As with many services across the Council, the Planning team is carrying a number of vacancies at this moment in time while recruitment activities continue. As a result, it has been a challenge ensuring the number of planning applications coming into the council are processed in a timely manner. However, we have two new colleagues joining the team next week and other measures are in place to help address the small backlog that has developed, to help ensure the service is running smoothly once again before Christmas.

Question from Councillor Hamblett – A significant overspend in this year’s budget is the result of high costs associated with temporary accommodation. We will soon be vacating the civic centre and QE hall. Could we consider the feasibility of using some of the existing buildings or using part of the site when this is re-developed to convert this to temporary accommodation?

Councillor Taylor replied, explaining that the significant overspend referenced relates to the Council meeting its statutory duties to support Oldham’s residents when they find themselves homeless. It is really sad to continue to see so many families continuing to struggle to afford their own home, but the Council continues to provide true public service by ensuring Oldham’s residents are not left homeless especially at this time of year as the cold winter weather approaches. There are many activities in flight to help address both the cost and more importantly the availability of temporary accommodation placements. This includes working with exploring new service delivery models, working with the partners and also the reuse of Council land and assets.

Question from Councillor Arnott – Councillor Arnott expressed his concerns at the high numbers of families with children that were being housed in temporary accommodation in Oldham, from outside of the Borough.

Councillor Taylor shared Councillor Arnott’s concerns and agreed that the current system was not working as it should.

Question from Councillor Junaid Hussain – the numbers of households in temporary accommodation is very worrying and new affordable housing is urgently needed. New applications to build social and affordable homes are welcome – especially given changes to the right to buy which will protect newly built social homes. The Chancellor announced an additional £500m for the Affordable Homes Programme in 2025/6. What will be the impact on house-building in Oldham?

Councillor Taylor replied that the Council has a pipeline of housing sites that it wants to prioritise for truly affordable and social housing and as opportunities arise to access funding such as this additional £500m, we are ready to put sites forward for the funding which will then accelerate the development of those much-needed homes for our residents.

Government departments have not shared all the detail about this new funding yet, however we are aware that this is a “top-up” to the budget and Oldham is ready to accelerate the delivery of house-building, especially on brownfield sites. Mr Mayor as part of the Council’s local response to the national housing crisis, we set up and established a housing task force with private landlords, registered social landlords, housing developers and third sector partners, and I am aware that ahead of the next meeting in December, there is a planned workshop to investigate how this announcement will benefit Oldham and how we can work co-operatively to get more affordable homes built.

c. Councillor Jabbar Deputy Leader and Value for Money and Sustainability Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor Byrne – I read that councils are sitting on £18billion earmarked for Affordable Housing, Roads and Schools despite the financial pressures facing local government. Some of these monies not spent for 5 years.

How much was received in grants for these purposes by this Council:

How was it spent:

How much is retained for future projects.

Councillor Jabbar replied that Over the 5 financial years from 2019/20 to 2023/24 the Council received £88.8m of capital grant funding to support Housing, Roads and School Projects.

The grants were spent on schemes to support the provision of housing and the development of housing sites, the provision of school places, major school maintenance projects and Special Educational Needs provision along with highway improvement and maintenance projects across the borough. On 31st March 2024 there were a total amount of £23.5m of funding that is retained for future projects. This is incorporated in the Council's current Capital Programme and will be utilised over the life of the current capital programme to deliver schemes to support Housing, Roads and schools within the borough.

Question from Councillor Nasheen – Could you give an update on how the Budget announced last week has affected the council's financial position?

Councillor Jabbar replied, that the government had announced **£1.3bn** specifically for local government plus a range of other measures

- Extended Producer Responsibilities (£1.1bn),
- Homelessness (£233m),
- children's social care reforms (£250m)

Which appear to take the total to some **£3bn**.

The budget indicated a reform of the way funding is allocated across the local government sector – starting with the *additional* funding announced for 2025-26 ahead of a broader redistribution of funding through a multi-year settlement from 2026-27.

In addition, the government has committed to provide resources to the public sector help fund the additional NI costs.

We don't yet know the exact impact on Oldham – this will become clear when the Local Government Finance Settlement is announced in December. At this stage we are confident that there will be additional resources than previously outlined in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and are working through a range of scenarios. It is also clear that there remain significant challenges to overcome and hard decisions to make in order to produce a balanced budget for 2025-26.

Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani - Could the Cabinet Member responsible please confirm what actions the Council have taken to inform residents receiving Universal Credit who are impacted by the decision of the DWP to not pay for housing in the 53rd financial week during leap years (such as this year). Will they commit to writing to the minister responsible to request that payments are made in the 53rd financial week, to ensure that additional financial pressure is not put on residents who are often struggling to budget from week to week, never mind saving up for an additional rent payment at the end of the year?

Councillor Jabbar replied that universal credit payments are paid monthly in arrears and are designed to mirror most wage payments in order to enable claimants to budget effectively, thereby making any transition into work easier for the claimant. If rent is paid weekly, a monthly amount will be calculated by multiplying the weekly rent by 52 and dividing by 12, unless rent is charged over fewer than 52 weeks.

The Council can provide help for tenants who may be struggling to meet their rent payments via Discretionary Housing Payments, which can be applied for on the Council's website. There is also additional help available for households this winter with the continuation of the Household Support Fund, which the government has committed to continue into 2025/26. Winter support for residents has a communications plan to ensure all residents are aware of the help and support available to them.

d. Councillor Mushtaq, Children and Young People Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor Aslam – The report outlines steps to create 17 new semi-independent placements and 12 new over-18s placements for young people, together with setting up 3 new children's homes. Can you outline how these homes will operate and why it is important to provide local homes for local children?

Councillor Mushtaq replied that Oldham's placement sufficiency strategy is to provide a home for every child in care by increasing the accommodation choices available for children and young people that meets their needs, and which will enable the council to have greater autonomy and control in meeting increasing placement demand, with reduced reliance on high-cost residential placements commissioned in the private provider market.

The new children's homes will be internally run by the children's social care residential service. New local semi-independent supported accommodation and over 18's placements are commissioned through private providers registered on the Placements Northwest Framework supporting young people to prepare for independent living.

By delivering a comprehensive and sufficient mix of high quality, local accommodation choices both internally and through commissioned arrangements, there are a range of benefits to

ensure the children in our care live in a safe, secure, stable, and caring home. These include:

- Children and young people remaining close to their existing support networks such as family, friends, school, and communities.
- Familiar settings that improve placement stability.
- Access to local education, employment, and training opportunities.
- Wider accommodation choices enabling better matching of accommodation, that offer the right environment to give children and young people the best chance of reaching their full potential, academically, socially, and emotionally.

Increased local job opportunities for our residents as part of the operational delivery model.

Question from Councillor Williamson - Thousands of children under councils up and down the country are participating in Page 2 of 2 the 'Fix Our Food' trial – extending Free School meals to more children and helping families break through language barriers and stigma to access Free School Meals. Will the Cabinet Member agree to look at including Oldham in this trial and support the work of 'Fix Our Food', by writing to the Secretary of State for Education urging her to reform Free School Meals so that eligible families are auto enrolled?

Councillor Mushtaq replied, thanking Councillor Williamson for being alerted to the Fix Our Food programme. He was delighted to say that already in Oldham, any application for Housing Benefits or Council Tax Relief is automatically also treated as a claim for a Free School Meal and it is awarded at the same time as their claim for the benefit is assessed. Further, the Council ensures that any cases where there have been changes to a benefit claim that would newly qualify a resident's child for a Free School Meal are processed. We also have an opt-out approach, rather than opt-in, so that claimants have to actually get in touch to say they don't want the Free School Meal entitlement, rather than the other way round. This means we are fully optimising entitlement across Oldham.

e. Councillor Mohon Ali, Education and Skills Portfolio

Question from Councillor Sajed Hussain - The report demonstrates that school leaders and staff are working very hard to ensure pupils attend school and stay on roll despite the significant challenges emerging after the pandemic. The Government has confirmed ending the VAT exemption on private school fees will be used to fund mental health support in schools. How soon will the funding be made available?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied, thanking Councillor Sajed Hussain for acknowledging the work going on across Oldham to maximise school attendance.

The Government has not yet announced when this funding for additional mental health support in schools will be made available.

We will continue to work to lobby our local MPs and the Department for Education direct to maximise the amount of extra funding available to Oldham so our schools and pupils can benefit out of it.

Question from Councillor Bishop - Despite repeated assurances from the Leader and the Cabinet that Eton Star Oldham is the right project to meet local educational need, the Department for Education has placed the project into review. Does the Cabinet Member have confidence that this is still the right project for Oldham?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied that following various announcements from the Government, we understand the financial challenges they are facing and we support the need to review projects and their costs, particularly in light of the improvements that are needed to existing school buildings. Every Oldham child, no matter where they live or whatever their background, is entitled to the opportunities which can help them fulfil their potential. The Eton Star Oldham proposal supports us in achieving this ambition. We're confident in the difference this project will make to the lives of children and young people in Oldham and we'll continue to make this case to the government. Whilst we await the outcome of the free school review, we will continue to do all we can to ensure all children and young people in Oldham have the best start in life.

Question from Councillor Quigg – Councillor Quigg sought clarification on who was responsible for footing the bill, for the Eton Star Project: the Council, the Department of Education or Eton Star?

Councillor Mohon Ali undertook to provide Councillor Quigg with a written answer to his question.

f. Councillor Fida Hussain, Enterprise Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor Malik - Get Britain Working is a £240 million cash-injection to accelerate the rollout of local services to help people back into work. The funding will partly go towards boosting the rollout of Get Britain Working “trailblazers” in local areas, which will bring together and streamline work, health, and skills support to disabled people and those who are long term sick. Do we know if Oldham will be one of these trailblazers?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied that the Council welcomes the Government's commitment to increasing economic growth. The Budget announced that DWP will shift its focus from welfare to work with a £240 million package to open up opportunities to millions of people left behind and denied the opportunity to get into work and get on at work.

DWP will publish a white paper to set out how it will address spiralling economic inactivity which sees a record 2.8 million people locked out of work due to long term sickness and are part of the Government's ambition to reach an 80% employment rate.

Historically Oldham has an employment rate of c. 70% and so the Council will lobby to secure investment in Oldham to support our residents. This programme will be managed by Greater Manchester Combined Authority with funding devolved to the Mayor.

Question from Councillor Sajed Hussain - shops in town centres across Oldham are experiencing high levels of shoplifting – the crackdown on organised gangs and low value crime announced in the budget is very welcome. What can local business organisations and the Council do to support this?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied that instances of shoplifting nationally are at their highest since records began 20 years ago, and real figures are likely to be much higher. Shop lifting cost the retail sector nearly £2bn last year, which results in price rises impacting on individual, families and communities. The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) are prioritising retail crime with the recent commitment to scrap the £200 shop theft threshold and making assaults on shop workers a criminal offence. They are also planning to establish a Retail Crime Forum for retailers to confidently implement tactics against shop theft.

In Oldham we encourage our retailers to report all incidents so that we can see the true impact on our retailers. We work closely with GMP and will ensure that these latest improvements to managing retail crime are prioritised in Oldham.

Across our high streets we encourage retailers to work together to share information through local security meetings.

Question from Councillor Quigg - How many people have used the Hive? Will the Council ensure an open and transparent tendering process that encourages local businesses to take part?

Councillor Fida Hussain undertook to provide Councillor Quigg with a written response to his question.

Question from Councillor Ghafoor – has a specific site been identified for the outdoor market and what are the timescales?

Councillor Fida Hussain undertook to provide Councillor Ghafoor with a written response to his question.

g. Councillor Brownridge, Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor Bashforth - Could you explain what missingness in healthcare means and how the Focused Care model helps to deliver better use of resources and good health outcomes for residents?

Councillor Brownridge replied that the study into 'Missingness' mentioned in my portfolio report is looking into people who repeatedly miss appointments and their medical status isn't known to their GPs.

Research is looking into why people are 'missing', trying to identify barriers people face in accessing services and what interventions are needed that can be embedded into practice. Some factors we expect the research to find are; Patients not identifying a need for an appointment; Poor communication or language barriers at appointments; Patients having competing demands, priorities, and urgencies; Travel and mobility issues; Lack of choice or flexibility in appointment times, locations, and people; costs associated with making appointments, such as waiting on hold; Appointments only being available at times when the patient has to be at work or looking after children. We're hoping to make invisible people visible and deliver better health outcomes.

Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani – Councillor Al-Hamdani was aware of at least one GP Practice in Oldham that had ceased taking bookings for appointments in-person or via the telephone and was only accepting online bookings?

Councillor Brownridge replied that she was aware of the situation but undertook to investigate this matter further.

Question from Councillor Hamblett - Would it be possible to have more scrutiny of Oldham Total Care?

Cllr Brownridge replied that she would look at ways in which this could be made to happen.

h. Councillor Goodwin, Don't Trash Oldham Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor Rustidge - thank you for the update on Highways work. The Chancellor announced an extra £500m nationally for pothole repair – do you know what the process will be for allocating this funding and what Oldham is likely to receive?

Councillor Goodwin replied that he was pleased to hear about the additional funds that have been allocated. As with other such announcements, the money is allocated to the region, which, for us at Oldham, is Greater Manchester Combined Authority – the money will then be split between the authorities and is traditionally based on a set calculation so as to ensure a fair and transparent allocation. We will share details of the amounts once these are known and as with other allocations, and we will ensure the money is spent on improving Oldham's highway network.

Question from Councillor Murphy (1) - Despite repeated interventions from Opposition councillors, Oldham Council still hasn't put renewed dog fouling protection order in place. When

does the Cabinet Member expect this situation to be rectified and what other enforcement measures will be put in place to protect our street, parks and green spaces from irresponsible pet owners?



Councillor Goodwin replied that the current focus of the Environmental Enforcement team is on areas of work that generate the most complaints from residents.

So far this year, the team have received over 5,700 referrals of fly-tipping and it is this area where the team focus their attention investigating incidents and fining individuals where they can. The capacity of the team is currently being reviewed along with examining other types of approach across enforcement and once the restructures are complete, we will engage with elected members for the priorities in your communities.

Question from Councillor Murphy (2) - This Council has a target of zero road deaths. Yet the council has taken the decision to make the Road Safety Officer redundant. How does this decision fall in line with the council's Vision Zero objectives and what impact will the loss of this post have on the safety of Oldham's roads?

Councillor Goodwin replied, thanking Councillor Murphy for his questions, stating that the Council continues with its ambitious target for zero road deaths on Oldham's roads, but as we all know, there are many factors outside the Council's control which contribute to road collisions.

I will not comment on the Council's voluntary redundancy scheme which has just concluded, however, all decisions about voluntary redundancy come with an impact assessment on service delivery. While the Council may well be losing one officer, the Road Safety engineering officers continue in service and alternative road safety education will be provided by various partners as needed.

Question from Councillor Adams - In June, Councillor Goodwin announced that the council had received 4.5 million pounds from the Conservative Government under the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.

The funding was provided to tackle potholes, improve road safety and secure public footways, and must be spent within a year.

In Royton, repairs and improvements were planned for: Rochdale Road, Kensington Avenue and Oak Avenue / Ash Grove / Pine Grove

Five months on from the announcement, would the cabinet member confirm how much of the work in Royton has been completed.

Councillor Goodwin replied that from the £4.5m funding allocation - £2.5m was for carriageway and footway maintenance with the remainder for highway safety, junction improvements, bridge repairs, and drainage maintenance. The programme of highways surfacing works across Oldham is well underway following approval of the programme by the Council earlier this year.

With regards to the specific works in Royton, I'm advised that the highway repairs and improvement will commence this December, followed by the preventative maintenance surfacing being programmed for March next year.

Question from Councillor Cosgrove - What progress has been made on the gulley cleaning programme?

Councillor Goodwin replied that the new gulley cleaning programme is making continued and steady progress with the 50,000 gulleys boroughwide. At this time of year, when leaves are falling regularly, the teams are occasionally pulled to priority areas where there is a risk of flooding to ensure the gullies in these areas remain clean and clear from debris.

However, the teams are currently working in Alexandra and St James' Wards, where approximately 70% of the highway gulleys have been cleaned.

The work remains on track, and we aim to start in St Marys ward by December this year.

Question from Councillor Zaheer Ali – asked when will the extended cemetery opening times be implemented, further to the amended Motion, on this subject, that was approved by the Council at its meeting on 10th July 2024?

Councillor Goodwin replied that the burial times at the Borough's cemeteries had been extended, in line with the requirements of the Motion but delays were occurring due to the role of the Independent Medical Examiner, which had created additional requirements.

Question from Councillor Arnott – asked if the Portfolio Holder could confirm that improvement works to the Borough's parks and green spaces were continuing to take place?

Councillor Goodwin confirmed that such improvements were continuing to happen and that the Cabinet had recently approved improvement work to six parks across the Borough.

- i. Councillor Dean, Thriving Communities and Culture Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor Charters - Oldham Athletic has had its share of governance issues - the government's football governance bill that was announced by the Culture Secretary should help avoid this being repeated in the future – has the Council has any discussions with the club about how the changes will impact Oldham Athletic?

Councillor Dean replied that he could confirm that an initial conversation has been had with Oldham Athletic which has been extremely helpful and reassuring, and they issued the following statement:

The Board of Oldham Athletic 2004 AFC Ltd is reviewing details and requirements laid out in the impending Football Governance Bill and making any necessary adjustments should there be a

requirement around its financial plans and resilience, fan consultation, corporate governance and annual declaration of responsibilities to ensure that it will comply with all statutory regulations as and when they are required along with National League rules and regulations.

Since the club's change of ownership in July 2022, a key theme of the Board's attention has been towards the development of a sustainable business model within the club. Having consolidated the land, stadium, and related businesses such as Gym, Event Centre, Retail Business and Education centre, the club has been focussed on the development and enrichment of these pillars of the business to support the football club ongoing from a sustainability perspective.

From a fan consultation perspective, the club held a Purposing Day early on after the takeover in July 22 which gave a voice and gathered views from a supporter's groups, Oldham Council, OAFK employees, local press, and Oldham Athletic Community Trust. The development of a club Purpose on a Page allowed for a cohesive and inclusive representation of all stakeholders into the Purpose that would later inform a 3-year vision and business plan for the club moving forwards. Further the club has also engaged monthly with the Oldham Athletic Supporters Foundation who are our official supporters club and minority shareholder. These meetings have been supported with documented agendas and minutes that are published for supporters to review and keep updated. The club has also held four public fans forums where supporters are offered to opportunity to ask questions in an open forum to members of the club board and management staff. Finally, the CEO and owners have produced video interviews biannually from this season to update supporters on progress and challenges that the club faces moving forwards. Members of the Board have also appeared on the fans podcast to answer questions.

Corporate governance and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion have also been key themes of the new Board and ownership. The club has successfully implemented a multi faith prayer facility whilst creating growth opportunities for Women's football with the establishment of a new full time female education programme in U16-18 football and creation of an open age women's team. The club has also linked with its U9-U16 Girls and Women's football club. The club also champions 'Her Game Too' as a group that represents the female interests of its supporters as a lobbying power and stakeholder in the club. For this the club has appointed a head of supporter liaison who leads dialogue with disability, inclusion, and female supporter groups.

Further governance and annual declaration responsibilities are supported by professional advice from the clubs legal and financial counsel that is keeps regular contact with.

Question from Councillor Marland - Given the inability to currently stop fireworks being set off in Oldham throughout the year, and at all times of the day and night, would the Cabinet Member responsible write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to ask if the Government will carry out an analysis of the use of Firework Control Zones in

Scotland, and to see whether similar legislation in the UK could help manage antisocial use of fireworks in boroughs like Oldham?



Councillor Dean replied that he could confirm that the Council, working in partnership with colleagues from Greater Manchester Fire Service, who licence retail premises of fireworks across the Borough and Greater Manchester Police continue to respond to concerns from residents especially the anti-social use of fireworks late at night.

The Council would be keen to ask the Government for an analysis of the use of control zones in Scotland with a view to potentially replicating this legislation across the UK.

Of particular note would be how the partners enforced these restrictions and how they were responded to by residents.

With this in mind, I agree with Councillor Marland and will ask officers of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government asking for such a review in conjunction with officials from Scotland.

Question from Councillor Aftab Hussain – We should all celebrate the reopening of Royton Library and the new members who have joined – could you outline how to join an Oldham Library, what services are on offer and how much it costs?

Councillor Dean replied that he was delighted with the new library and have received overwhelmingly positive feedback about the new facilities.

Since re-opening on 14th September, we have had 262 new members join Royton Library.

All of Oldham Libraries are free to join. Residents can register online or come along to any of our libraries. Children under 13 require a guardian with them to join.

Royton Town Hall where the library is located is one of our 'Working for You' Community Hubs with a wide range of support for our residents including access to help, advice and support. Specifically, most services provided at Royton Library are free to use. In addition to physical book borrowing, residents can access e-books, e-journals and e-newspapers via the Borrowbox app. The library also provides residents with IT services including online basics course to support with digital skills.

Other regular activities include Bounce and Rhyme sessions for families with children under 5, Baby Art Studio and the Royton Readers Groups. All Councillors are asked to keep an eye on the "what's on" events guide for activities in libraries in your areas.

Question from Councillor Kouser - Where is the Council up to with tendering process for the former Marlborough Community Centre (formerly Pakistan Community Centre), adding that Councillor Aftab Hussain appeared to have shared information on social media - should these details have been shared publicly and prematurely?

Councillor Ghafoor also asked the Portfolio Holder for Thriving Communities and Culture, where the information, that Councillor

Aftab Hussain had shared information on social media, had come from?

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Shah, undertook to write to Councillors Kouser and Ghafoor to clarify the situation regarding the Marlborough Community Centre.

10

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Motion 1: Increasing Pension Credit Take-up

Councillor Jabbar **MOVED** and Councillor Dean **SECONDED** the following Motion:

This council recognises the importance of financial security for our pensioners, particularly those with low incomes. Pension Credit is a vital benefit that can significantly enhance the quality of life for eligible individuals and open the door to a range of other benefits and services, yet many are unaware of its availability or how to apply.

It's estimated there are 3,288 pensioners in the Borough currently missing out on pension credit, this amounts to £7.9m going unclaimed.

This Council resolves to:

- a. Launch an Awareness Campaign – to develop a targeted campaign to educate residents about Pension Credit, including its eligibility criteria, application process, and potential benefits.
- b. Collaborate with Local Organisations to partner with community groups and local charities to disseminate information and assist residents with applications.
- c. Increase capacity to support residents – to identify and temporarily re-prioritise staffing capacity to support residents with applications where they may struggle to apply themselves and do not have anyone who can help them.
- d. Monitor and Report – to establish a system to monitor the impact of the awareness campaign and report back to the council within six months, providing data on the increase in Pension Credit applications and any feedback from residents.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That the Council launches an Awareness Campaign –** to develop a targeted campaign to educate residents about Pension Credit, including its eligibility criteria, application process, and potential benefits.
- 2 That the Council collaborates with Local Organisations to partner** with community groups and local charities to disseminate information and assist residents with applications.
- 3 That the Council increases capacity to support residents –** to identify and temporarily re-prioritise staffing capacity to support residents with applications where they may struggle to apply themselves and do not have anyone who can help them.

- 4 That the Council monitor and report** – to establish a system to monitor the impact of the awareness campaign and report back to the council within six months, providing data on the increase in Pension Credit applications and any feedback from residents.



Motion 2: Supporting Kinship Carers

Councillor Mushtaq MOVED and Councillor Navesey SECONDED the following Motion:

Council believes that children and young people who are unable to live with their parents should receive the support that they and their carers need to safeguard and promote their welfare, whether or not they are looked after by the state.

This Council notes:

That here are 141,000 children in Kinship Care in England and Wales – carers who are friends or family who step up to care for a child where their parents can't. Many children and young people in the care of Oldham Council are looked after by Kinship Carers and the numbers are increasing.

That in October 2024 the Government has published 'Kinship Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities' which pulls together the responsibilities of Councils in supporting all forms of kinship care (informal arrangements, private fostering, Kinship Foster Care, Child Arrangement Orders, Special Guardianship Orders and adoption).

Research by the charity *Kinship* has highlighted the need for practical support for Kinship Carers - one third said their income had dropped by 50% after taking on caring responsibilities and one in five often or always feel lonely.

There are Council employees who have taken on the responsibility of providing kinship care or who are approved Foster Carers

Council recognises the increasing demands being made of the Fostering Service and the valuable work done by Kinship and Mainstream Foster Carers in caring for children looked after by the Council and the investment made into the service to support carers and those taking Special Guardianship Orders.

This Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Director of Children's Services to urgently review the new statutory guidance and ensure that the Council is compliant, particularly in making available the Kinship Local Offer on the Council's website.
2. Become a Kinship Friendly Employer as soon as is practicable, working towards achieving the Gold Standard
3. Record its thanks to all those who provide Kinship Care and mainstream Foster Care in Oldham.

1st AMENDMENT

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

Council believes that children and young people who are unable to live with their parents should receive the support that they and their carers need to safeguard and promote their welfare, whether or not they are looked after by the state.



This Council notes:

That there are 141,000 children in Kinship Care in England and Wales – carers who are friends or family who step up to care for a child where their parents can't. Many children and young people in the care of Oldham Council are looked after by Kinship Carers and the numbers are increasing.

That in October 2024 the Government has published 'Kinship Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities' which pulls together the responsibilities of Councils in supporting all forms of kinship care (informal arrangements, private fostering, Kinship Foster Care, Child Arrangement Orders, Special Guardianship Orders and adoption).

Research by the charity Kinship has highlighted the need for practical support for Kinship Carers - one third said their income had dropped by 50% after taking on caring responsibilities and one in five often or always feel lonely.

Every child that goes into kinship care instead of local authority care could save the taxpayer more than £35,000 a year.

There are Council employees who have taken on the responsibility of providing kinship care or who are approved Foster Carers Council recognises the increasing demands being made of the Fostering Service and the valuable work done by Kinship and Mainstream Foster Carers in caring for children looked after by the Council and the investment made into the service to support carers and those taking Special Guardianship Orders.

This Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Director of Children's Services to urgently review the new statutory guidance and ensure that the Council is compliant, particularly in making available the Kinship Local Offer on the Council's website.
2. Supports kinship carers being given the same financial support as foster carers and write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to advocate for this.
3. Become a Kinship Friendly Employer as soon as is practicable, working towards achieving the Gold Standard
4. Record its thanks to all those who provide Kinship Care and mainstream Foster Care in Oldham.

A vote was taken on the 1st AMENDMENT which was LOST.

2nd AMENDMENT

Councillor Byrne MOVED and Councillor Sheldon SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

Council believes that children and young people who are unable to live with their parents should receive the support that they and

their carers need to safeguard and promote their welfare, whether or not they are looked after by the state.



Oldham
Council

This Council notes:

That there are 141,000 children in Kinship Care in England and Wales – carers who are friends or family who step up to care for a child where their parents can't. Many children and young people in the care of Oldham Council are looked after by Kinship Carers and the numbers are increasing.

That in October 2024 the Government has published 'Kinship Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities' which pulls together the responsibilities of Councils in supporting all forms of kinship care (informal arrangements, private fostering, Kinship Foster Care, Child Arrangement Orders, Special Guardianship Orders and adoption).

Research by the charity Kinship has highlighted the need for practical support for Kinship Carers - one third said their income had dropped by 50% after taking on caring responsibilities and one in five often or always feel lonely.

There are Council employees who have taken on the responsibility of providing kinship care or who are approved Foster Carers Council recognises the increasing demands being made of the Fostering Service and the valuable work done by Kinship and Mainstream Foster Carers in caring for children looked after by the Council and the investment made into the service to support carers and those taking Special Guardianship Orders.

This Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Director of Children's Services to urgently review the new statutory guidance and ensure that the Council is compliant, particularly in making available the Kinship Local Offer on the Council's website.
2. Become a Kinship Friendly Employer as soon as is practicable, working towards achieving the Gold Standard.
3. Record its thanks to all those who provide Kinship Care and mainstream Foster Care in Oldham.
4. Make sure the policy will have adequate financial support to implement all the aforementioned policies that the Council should already be adhering to and that a report will be made available at the next Council meeting on the implementation of this policy.

A vote was taken on the 2nd AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

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

RESOLVED:

The Council resolves to

1. Instruct the Director of Children's Services to urgently review the new statutory guidance and ensure that the Council is compliant, particularly in

making available the Kinship Local Offer on the Council's website.

2. Become a Kinship Friendly Employer as soon as is practicable, working towards achieving the Gold Standard.
3. Record its thanks to all those who provide Kinship Care and mainstream Foster Care in Oldham.
4. Make sure the policy will have adequate financial support to implement all the aforementioned policies that the Council should already be adhering to and that a report will be made available at the next Council meeting on the implementation of this policy.

11

NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS

Motion 1: Stop the Winter Fuel Payment Cuts

Councillor Bishop **MOVED** and Councillor Marland **SECONDED** the following Motion:

This Council notes that:

The recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal Winter Fuel Payments has restricted eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credit, excluding too many vulnerable pensioners.

Many pensioners on lower and middle incomes will no longer receive the payments. Across England and Wales, the number of people eligible for Winter Fuel Payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million). According to data obtained by the Liberal Democrats from the Department of Work and Pensions, 85% of pensioners in Oldham Borough will lose out. There are an estimated 7,800 pensioners in Oldham over the age of 80 set to lose their winter fuel payment who do not receive pension credit.

This Council believes that:

The criteria for Winter Fuel Payments that the Labour Government is using will exclude too many pensioners who need help. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for Pension Credit.

This is significantly lower than the living wage rate.

Take up of Pension Credit has been worryingly low, more than one in three eligible pensioners are not signed up. We have a role to play to increase awareness of welfare support such as Pension Credit to ensure people get the help that they need.

This Council further notes that:

The Energy Price Cap has risen by 10% in October, which combined with the removal of Winter Fuel Payments will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

This Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Council's Communications Team to urgently commence a significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of Pension Credit. This should include a dedicated advice line, promotion in the local press as well as targeted letters to those who may be eligible.
2. Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately paused and introduce a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments. Council further requests the Leader of the Council write to Oldham's three MPs asking them to give their formal support to halting these changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Dean MOVED and Councillor Aftab Hussain SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

This Council notes that:

The recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal Winter Fuel Payments has restricted eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credit. In addition, Labour is keeping the triple lock which increased a full state pension by £902.20 PA in April 2024 and will rise again by £470.60 PA in April 2025.

Many pensioners on lower and middle incomes will no longer receive the payments. Across England and Wales, the number of people eligible for Winter Fuel Payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million).

While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance. However, those on the full state pension who aren't now entitled to Winter Fuel Allowance are receiving just £41.40 a year less than someone on Pension Credit who is also in receipt of the Winter Fuel Allowance of £200 a year – a difference of 79p a week.

This Council believes that:

The criteria for Winter Fuel Payments that the Labour Government is using will exclude too many pensioners who need help. The standard minimum guarantee has been raised to £227.10 a week meaning pensioners earning up to £11,809 PA can now claim pension credit.

This is significantly lower than the living wage rate.

Take up of Pension Credit has been worryingly low, more than one in three eligible pensioners are not signed up. Oldham Council is working with partners to increase awareness of

welfare support such as Pension Credit to ensure people get the help that they need.



This Council further notes that:

The Energy Price Cap has risen by 10% in October, which combined with the removal of Winter Fuel Payments will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

Universal Winter Fuel Payments has been a neglected and overlooked benefit payment during the period of the last Conservative Government having sat statically at £200 and £300. Between 2010 and 2023 state pensions have risen from £97.65 a week to £221.20, and average combined energy bills have risen from £1076 to £1,834. The effective spending power of the Winter Fuel Allowance due to this has been greatly eroded.

This Council resolves to:

1. Reconfirm the Council's resolution to launch a targeted Awareness Campaign to maximise the uptake of Pension Credit; collaborate with local organisations to inform and assist residents with applications; identify and prioritise staff to help residents complete application; monitor and report on the effectiveness of the campaign.
2. Instruct the Acting Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to express Council's view that the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt should be reviewed and a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered. Council further requests the Acting Chief Executive write to Oldham's three MPs asking them to give their formal support to a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

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

RESOLVED:

1. Council agrees to re-confirm its resolution to launch a targeted Awareness Campaign to maximise the uptake of Pension Credit; to collaborate with local organisations to inform and to assist residents with applications; to identify and prioritise staff to help residents complete application; and to monitor and report on the effectiveness of the campaign.
2. Council request that the Acting Chief Executive be authorised to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to express Council's view that the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt should be

reviewed and a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered. Council further requests the Acting Chief Executive write to the Borough of Oldham's three MPs asking them to give their formal support to a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered.



Motion 2: The Budget Challenge

Councillor Lancaster MOVED and Councillor Woodvine SECONDED the following Motion:

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has delivered a budget which will impact the people who live in the Oldham Metropolitan Borough.

This Council resolves:

1. To write to Oldham's three MP's, the relevant government departments and agencies to reinstate Winter Fuel Payments for all pensioners, without any means testing. All pensioners, regardless of income or other financial factors, should receive this payment automatically in recognition of their lifelong contributions to society through taxes.
2. That the Council will do all it can to help alleviate those struggling paying for winter fuel bills this winter, given the Energy Price Cap has increased by 10% also adding £150 to the average fuel bill.

1st AMENDMENT

Councillor Lancaster MOVED and Councillor Woodvine SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has delivered a Budget which will adversely impact the people who live in Oldham Metropolitan Borough.

This Council notes that:

- Following the coronavirus pandemic and pressures caused by the Russo-Ukrainian War in recent years, this Labour Government assumed a stable inheritance from the previous Conservative Government – inflation at the 2% target, mortgage rates being cut, low unemployment, lower borrowing than other major economies, second lowest debt across the G7, and the fastest growing advanced economy.
- The supposed '£22 billion black hole' is entirely fictitious, has failed to be evidenced, and is simply a political pretext to raise taxes.
- Despite pre-election promises to the contrary, the UK Government are set to significantly raise taxation to a new historic high point.

- The Budget sets a concerning, high risk increase in state borrowing of £32 billion additional per annum.
- The Budget represents a return to tired 'tax and spend' policies which will stifle long-term economic growth, as the Office for Budget Responsibility has forecast.
- With a £25 billion raid through employers' National Insurance contributions, this Budget is bad for business, and will inevitably lead to higher consumer costs, suppressed wages, and lower employment.
- This Budget will cause further hardship through increases to Capital Gains Tax, Stamp Duty, energy taxes, inheritance and education taxes, and cuts to agricultural and business reliefs.
- Poorer pensioners will particularly suffer through strict means testing of the Winter Fuel Payment, which will result in around 34,000 Oldhamers losing this vital support provision.

This Council resolves:

1. To instruct the Chief Executive to write to Oldham's three MP's, the relevant government departments, and agencies to reinstate Winter Fuel Payments for all pensioners, without any means testing. All pensioners, regardless of income or other financial factors, should receive this payment automatically in recognition of their lifelong contributions to society through taxes.
2. That the Council will do all it can to help alleviate those who are struggling paying for winter fuel bills this winter, given that the Energy Price Cap has increased by 10%, also adding £150 to the average fuel bill.
3. To instruct the Chief Executive to write to Oldham's three MPs, the relevant government departments, and agencies to articulate the adverse impact which the national Budget will Page 9 inflict on residents of our Borough, to express deep concern about the many tax rises, and to invite an alternative policy direction.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was LOST.

2nd AMENDMENT

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor McLaren SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

The first woman to serve as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves MP, has delivered a budget which will impact

the people who live in the Oldham Metropolitan Borough for the better.

Delivering a budget that will restore stability, protect working people, fix the NHS and rebuild Britain.

Fixing the foundations of our economy following fourteen years of failed Conservative austerity.

Restoring fiscal responsibility following Conservative economic mismanagement including Liz Truss's 2022 mini budget and an inherited £22 billion spending black hole.

This Labour budget invests in Britain and the public services so vital to our residents, the Chancellor has delivered:

- A pay rise for 3 million workers
- A freeze on fuel duty
- New funding to deliver an extra two million NHS operations, scans and appointments a year.
- No tax increases for working people.
- £30million for breakfast clubs.
- £240million package to Get Britain Working again.
- £1.4billion to rebuild 500 schools.
- £500m investment to build thousands of new social homes.
- £1billion boost to the Household Support Fund.
- £1.3billion extra funding for Local Government, including £600m for social care.
- An increase in the state pension by up to £470.
- The biggest increase to Carer's Allowance eligibility since its introduction.
- 40% relief on business rates for hospitality and leisure sectors.
- Non-dom tax status abolished.
- £500million to fix roads and fill potholes.
- Increased the employment allowance to support small businesses.
- A crack down on fraud, waste and tax avoidance.

This Council notes that:

- Universal Winter Fuel Payment had been a neglected and overlooked benefit payment during the period of the last Conservative Government having sat statically at £200 and £300. Between 2010 and 2023 state pensions have risen from £97.65 a week to £221.20, and average combined energy bills have risen from £1,076 to £1,834.
- The effective spending power of the Winter Fuel Allowance due to this has been greatly eroded.
- Maintaining the Triple Lock means State Pensions will rise further to £235.25 a week in April 2025.
- It is regrettable that those over 75 who sit just above the Pension Credit cut-off suffer additional financial hardship due to the Conservative Party's broken manifesto commitment to protect free TV licences, limiting it instead to just those on Pension Credit.

- The government's approach understands there are barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

This Council resolves:

1. To ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to congratulate her on being the first woman to deliver a budget in the history of our country.
2. That the Acting Chief Executive be requested to write to Oldham's three MP's asking them to give their support to a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered.
3. That the Council will do all it can to help alleviate those struggling paying for winter fuel bills this winter, given the Energy Price Cap has increased by 10% also adding £150 to the average fuel bill, including implementing the agreed Awareness Campaign.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

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

RESOLVED:

This Council resolves:

1. To request that the Leader of the Council write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to congratulate her on being the first woman to deliver a budget in the history of our country.
2. That the Acting Chief Executive be requested to write to Oldham's three MP's asking them to give their support to a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered.
3. That the Council will do all it can to help alleviate those struggling paying for winter fuel bills this winter, given the Energy Price Cap has increased by 10% also adding £150 to the average fuel bill, including implementing the agreed Awareness Campaign.

Motion 3: Immediate Ceasefire in Gaza

Councillor Chowhan MOVED and Councillor Wahid SECONDED the following Motion:

Background:

As of October 2024, the situation in Gaza has reached a dire humanitarian crisis, with the Gaza Health Ministry reporting that over **42,000** individuals have lost their lives due to ongoing military operations. This includes approximately **14,100 children** and **9,000 women**, indicating a

devastating toll on the civilian population. In addition to the loss of life, the health infrastructure in Gaza has been severely impacted. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has confirmed that there have been **over 516 verified attacks on healthcare facilities** in the Gaza Strip since the conflict escalated.



The attacks have resulted in significant damage to hospitals, disrupting essential healthcare services and leaving many without access to medical care. The United Nations has expressed deep concern over the escalating violence. Secretary-General António Guterres stated, on 20th October 2024, "The violence must stop immediately," emphasising that "the protection of civilians is paramount." Furthermore, world leaders have called for an immediate ceasefire. French President Emmanuel Macron stated on 18th October 2024, "We must work together to bring about an immediate ceasefire and ensure the safety of all civilians." Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau echoed this sentiment on 19th October 2024, stating, "Canada calls for an end to hostilities and the protection of human rights in Gaza."

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) raised alarms about the situation on 15th October 2024, indicating that the ongoing actions in Gaza may constitute violations of international law and could be characterised as genocide. The ICJ noted, "All parties must adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law and protect the civilian population."

Humanitarian organisations, including UNICEF, state that "every child in Gaza is in danger," highlighting the urgent need for safe corridors for aid to reach those in need.

Justification:

This motion is brought to the council as a matter of urgency due to the following reasons:

- 1. Humanitarian Responsibility:** As representatives of our community, we have a moral obligation to advocate for the protection of human rights and the welfare of civilians in conflict zones. The ongoing violence in Gaza has led to a humanitarian catastrophe that requires immediate action.
- 2. International Law:** The situation in Gaza poses serious questions regarding adherence to international humanitarian law. By passing this motion, the council can reaffirm its commitment to upholding these principles and advocate for accountability on the global stage.
- 3. Community Sentiment:** There is a growing concern among constituents regarding the ongoing conflict and its humanitarian impact. Bringing this motion forward allows the council to express solidarity with affected populations and demonstrate responsiveness to community concerns.
- 4. Global Leadership:** The motion aligns with the calls from world leaders and international organisations for immediate action. By taking a stand, the council can contribute to a collective global response aimed at de-escalating the conflict and ensuring the protection of civilians.

In light of these developments, **the council resolves to:**

1. Call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, urging all parties involved to halt hostilities and prioritise the protection of civilian lives.
2. Support the rapid entry of humanitarian aid to address the urgent needs of the population affected by the ongoing conflict.
3. Call and enforce a ban on the supply of military equipment specifically used to bomb Palestinian civilians, while allowing for the entry of supplies intended solely for genuine defence purposes.

Furthermore, the council requests that the Chief Executive write to the Prime Minister, urging the UK government to:

4. Call and enforce an immediate ceasefire in international forums.
5. Facilitate the rapid entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza.
6. Meet their moral obligation by suspending all arms sales to Israel until such time that international humanitarian law is observed and respected.

Through these actions, the council seeks to contribute to the restoration of peace and the protection of human rights in the region.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Mushtaq MOVED and Councillor Islam SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

Background:

As of October 2024, the situation in Gaza has reached a dire humanitarian crisis, with the Gaza Health Ministry reporting that over **42,000** individuals have lost their lives due to ongoing military operations. This includes approximately **14,100 children** and **9,000 women**, indicating a devastating toll on the civilian population. In addition to the loss of life, the health infrastructure in Gaza has been severely impacted. The

World Health Organisation (WHO) has confirmed that there have been **over 516 verified attacks on healthcare facilities** in the Gaza Strip since the conflict escalated.

The attacks have resulted in significant damage to hospitals, disrupting essential healthcare services and leaving many without access to medical care. The United Nations has expressed deep concern over the escalating violence.

Secretary-General António Guterres stated, on 20th October 2024, "The violence must stop immediately," emphasising that "the protection of civilians is paramount." Furthermore, world leaders have called for an immediate ceasefire. French President Emmanuel Macron stated on 18th October 2024, "We must work together to bring about an immediate ceasefire and ensure the safety of all civilians." Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau echoed this sentiment on 19th October 2024, stating, "Canada calls for an end to hostilities and the protection of human rights in Gaza."

This council called for a ceasefire at the start of the hostilities, and Cllr Arooj Shah called for a ceasefire with other Greater Manchester Leaders on 27th October 2023. Oldham's Mayor Cllr Zahid Chauhan OBE wrote to the former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak MP on 2nd November 2023 telling him that the people of Oldham called for a ceasefire.

The borough's MPs voted for a ceasefire in February 2024, and the ending of hostilities in the region to allow humanitarian aid and a diplomatic solution has been the consistent policy of the UK Government since Sir Keir Starmer became Prime Minister in July 2024.

Since then, Israel has attacked and invaded Lebanon, escalating a conflict and affecting even more innocent civilians, including those here in Oldham with loved ones in the region. Israel's Parliament has passed legislation banning UNWRA from operating within Israeli occupied territory, including Gaza, the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, preventing a key provider of aid from reaching the people who need it the most during this conflict. This has been condemned by the US State Department, the Secretary General of the UN and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, amongst other international partners.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) raised alarms about the situation on 15th October 2024, indicating that the ongoing actions in Gaza may constitute violations of international law and could be characterised as genocide. The ICJ noted, "All parties must adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law and protect the civilian population."

Humanitarian organisations, including UNICEF, state that "every child in Gaza is in danger," highlighting the urgent need for safe corridors for aid to reach those in need.

Justification:

This motion is brought to the council as a matter of urgency due to the following reasons:

1. Humanitarian Responsibility: As representatives of our community, we have a moral obligation to advocate for the protection of human rights and the welfare of civilians in conflict zones. The ongoing violence in Gaza has led to a humanitarian catastrophe that requires immediate action.

2. International Law: The situation in Gaza poses serious questions regarding adherence to international humanitarian law. By passing this motion, the council can reaffirm its commitment to upholding these principles and advocate for accountability on the global stage.

3. Community Sentiment: There is a growing concern among constituents regarding the ongoing conflict and its humanitarian impact. Bringing this motion forward allows the council to express solidarity with affected populations and demonstrate responsiveness to community concerns.

4. Global Leadership: The motion aligns with the calls from world leaders and international organisations for immediate action. By taking a stand, the council can contribute to a collective global response aimed at de-escalating the conflict and ensuring the protection of civilians.

In light of these developments, **the council resolves to:**

1. Call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, urging all parties involved to halt hostilities, prioritise the protection of civilian lives and the immediate release of the Israeli hostages taken on the 7th October 2023.
2. Support the rapid entry of humanitarian aid to address the urgent needs of the population affected by the ongoing conflict.
3. Support the UK Government's decision to withdraw export licences to Israel, preventing equipment that would be used in the conflict in Gaza from reaching the front line.
4. Condemn the decision by the Israeli Knesset to ban the UNWRA from operating in Israeli controlled territory, including Gaza, the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, noting that this has been met with widespread international condemnation, including from the United States government and the Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer.
5. Condemn both Hamas and Hezbollah for their terrorist attacks on civilians and the taking of hostages by Hamas on October 7th 2023, and support calls from the international community to lay down arms and instead work with international partners to reach a diplomatic solution that safeguards innocent civilians in Lebanon, Palestine and Israel.

Furthermore, the council requests that the Chief Executive write to the Prime Minister, urging the UK government to:

1. Re-iterate calls for an immediate Ceasefire in both Gaza and Lebanon and work with international partners to achieve this.
2. Facilitate the rapid entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and Lebanon.
3. Continuously review export licences for international Arms Sales and suspend any that could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of International Humanitarian Law.

Through these actions, the council seeks to contribute to the restoration of peace and the protection of human rights in the region.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

A recorded vote, in line with the Regulations was then taken on the MOTION AS AMENDED as follows:

COUNCILLOR		COUNCILLOR	
Adams Christine	ABSTAINED	Hussain Junaid	FOR
Akhtar Shoab	APOLOGIES	Hussain Sajed	FOR
Al-Hamdani Sam	FOR	Ibrahim Nyla	ABSTAINED
Ali Mohon	FOR	Iqbal Nadeem	FOR

Ali Zaheer	ABSTAINED	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	FOR
Arnott Dave	ABSTAINED	Jabbar Abdul	FOR
Aslam Naseem	FOR	Kenyon Mark	FOR
Azad Montaz Ali	ABSTAINED	Kouser Aisha	ABSTAINED
Ball Sandra	ABSTAINED	Lancaster Luke	AGAINST
Bishop Helen	FOR	Malik Abdul	FOR
Bashforth Marie	FOR	Marland Alicia	FOR
Brownridge Barbara	FOR	McLaren Colin	FOR
Byrne Pam	ABSTAINED	Moores Eddie (Deputy Mayor)	FOR
Charters Josh	FOR	Murphy Dave	FOR
Cosgrove Angela	FOR	Mushtaq Shaid	FOR
Chowhan Naveed	ABSTAINED	Nasheen Umar	FOR
Davis Peter	FOR	Navesey Lisa	FOR
Dean Peter	FOR	Quigg Lewis	AGAINST
Ghafoor Kamran	ABSTAINED	Rustidge Ken	FOR
Goodwin Chris	FOR	Shah Arooj	FOR
Hamblett Louie	FOR	Sharp Beth	AGAINST
Harkness Garth	FOR	Sheldon Graham	AGAINST
Harrison Holly	FOR	Shuttleworth Graham	FOR
Hince Marc	FOR	Sykes Howard	FOR
Hindle Neil	FOR	Taylor Elaine	FOR
Hobin Brian	FOR	Wahid Abdul	ABSTAINED
Hughes Jade	ABSTAINED	Wilkinson Mark	ABSTAINED
Hurley Maggie	ABSTAINED	Williamson Diane	FOR
Hussain Aftab	FOR	Woodvine Max	AGAINST
Hussain Fida	FOR	Chauhan Zahid (MAYOR)	FOR

On a recorded VOTE being taken 40 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION AS AMENDED with 5 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 14 ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION AS AMENDED was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, urging all parties involved to halt hostilities, prioritise the protection of civilian lives and the immediate release of the Israeli hostages taken on 7th October 2023.
2. That the Council support the rapid entry of humanitarian aid to address the urgent needs of the population affected by the ongoing conflict.

3. That the Council support the UK Government's decision to withdraw export licences to Israel, preventing equipment that would be used in the conflict in Gaza from reaching the front line.
4. That the Council condemn the decision by the Israeli Knesset to ban the UNWRA from operating in Israeli controlled territory, including Gaza, the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, noting that this has been met with widespread international condemnation, including from the United States government and the Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer.
5. That the Council condemn both Hamas and Hezbollah for their terrorist attacks on civilians and the taking of hostages by Hamas on October 7th 2023 and support calls from the international community to lay down arms and instead work with international partners to reach a diplomatic solution that safeguards innocent civilians in Lebanon, Palestine and Israel.
6. That, furthermore, the council requests that the Chief Executive write to the Prime Minister, urging the UK government to:
 - Re-iterate calls for an immediate Ceasefire in both Gaza and Lebanon and work with international partners to achieve this.
 - Facilitate the rapid entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and Lebanon.
 - Continuously review export licences for international Arms Sales and suspend any that could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of International Humanitarian Law.

Through these actions, the council seeks to contribute to the restoration of peace and the protection of human rights in the region.

12

PLACES FOR EVERYONE JOINT DEVELOPMENT PLAN: REQUEST FOR REVOCATION OF THE PLAN FOR OLDHAM

Councillor Taylor MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which reminded Members that a motion had been submitted to the Council for consideration on 10th July 2024, for the removal of Oldham Borough from the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan. The motion was amended to include a requirement for member workshops to inform members about the opportunities and risks associated with this decision, ahead of a report being brought back to the November Council meeting for consideration and decision.

Five workshops were held to provide all elected members with the opportunity to ask questions, understand all the issues,

opportunities and legal risks associated with the decision they need to make given PfE was formally adopted earlier in 2024 and is now part of the statutory development plan for Oldham.



The report advised that there were no powers for a Council to 'undo' an adopted Local Plan once it had taken effect; and it was understood that the Secretary of State (SoS) had never been asked to revoke a newly adopted Plan or Joint Plan such as PfE. As such, for both Oldham and the other eight Greater Manchester authorities within the Plan, the legal ramifications of revocation needed to be fully explored with the support of specialist legal advice and careful consideration given to the financial, planning, environmental and reputational implications.

The report before Council set out two sets of information for members to consider:

1. The concerns listed within the motion as justification for writing to the SoS; and
2. The implications and consequences of deciding to make a request to the SoS for the revocation of PfE for Oldham.

All members were invited to a series of workshops through which officers were able to answer questions and fully explain the ramifications of the motion, on Oldham and the remaining eight PfE authorities. 37 of 60 elected members attended the workshops - details of the key issues discussed were appended to the report.

A recorded vote, in line with the Regulations was then taken on the RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SUBMITTED REPORT as follows:

COUNCILLOR		COUNCILLOR	
Adams Christine	AGAINST	Hussain Junaid	FOR
Akhtar Shoab	APOLOGIES	Hussain Sajed	FOR
Al-Hamdani Sam	AGAINST	Ibrahim Nyla	AGAINST
Ali Mohon	FOR	Iqbal Nadeem	FOR
Ali Zaheer	AGAINST	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	FOR
Arnott Dave	AGAINST	Jabbar Abdul	FOR
Aslam Naseem	FOR	Kenyon Mark	AGAINST
Azad Montaz Ali	AGAINST	Kouser Aisha	AGAINST
Ball Sandra	AGAINST	Lancaster Luke	AGAINST
Bishop Helen	AGAINST	Malik Abdul	FOR
Bashforth Marie	FOR	Marland Alicia	AGAINST
Brownridge Barbara	FOR	McLaren Colin	FOR

Byrne Pam	AGAINST	Moore's Eddie (Deputy Mayor)	FOR
Charters Josh	FOR	Murphy Dave	AGAINST
Cosgrove Angela	FOR	Mushtaq Shaid	FOR
Chowhan Naveed	AGAINST	Nasheen Umar	FOR
Davis Peter	FOR	Navesey Lisa	AGAINST
Dean Peter	FOR	Quigg Lewis	AGAINST
Ghafoor Kamran	AGAINST	Rustidge Ken	FOR
Goodwin Chris	FOR	Shah Arooj	FOR
Hamblett Louie	AGAINST	Sharp Beth	AGAINST
Harkness Garth	AGAINST	Sheldon Graham	AGAINST
Harrison Holly	FOR	Shuttleworth Graham	FOR
Hince Marc	AGAINST	Sykes Howard	AGAINST
Hindle Neil	FOR	Taylor Elaine	FOR
Hobin Brian	FOR	Wahid Abdul	AGAINST
Hughes Jade	AGAINST	Wilkinson Mark	AGAINST
Hurley Maggie	AGAINST	Williamson Diane	AGAINST
Hussain Aftab	FOR	Woodvine Max	AGAINST
Hussain Fida	FOR	Chauhan Zahid (MAYOR)	FOR

On a recorded VOTE being taken 29 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SUBMITTED REPORT with 30 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 0 ABSTENTIONS. The RECOMMENDATIONS were therefore LOST.

13

CORPORATE PLAN 2024 - 2027: READY FOR THE FUTURE

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Jabbar SECONDED the Council's Corporate Plan covering 2024 – 2027, entitled: 'Ready for the Future'. Oldham Council's last Corporate Plan was adopted in 2022. However, since that time the environment in which Oldham Council operates has changed significantly. As the Council now looks to the future, a new Corporate Plan is required, ensuring alignment to the new Oldham Plan missions, while supporting the policy and operational priorities of the administration. The new Corporate Plan 2024-27 'Ready for the Future' sets out these missions for the next three years, putting the needs of our communities at the heart of everything the Council does.

The Corporate Plan 'Ready for the Future' also provides the core of the Council's contribution to delivering the new Oldham Plan: Pride, Progress, Partnership.

Oldham Council's Corporate Plan 2024-27 describes how the Council will maximise the impact of its efforts and resource to improve the lives of residents in the borough over the three-year

period up to 2027. The plan, which aligns with the Oldham Partnership's vision document (Pride, Progress, Partnership), focuses specifically on responding to the needs and aspirations of the Borough's communities. The plan outlines how the Council will contribute to the Oldham Plan missions, its organisational values and behaviours, and how the authority will create the right conditions for success. The plan sets out three key missions: Happier, Healthier Lives; Great Place to Live; and Green and Growing.



RESOLVED:

1. That Council notes the contents of the Corporate Plan 2024-27 and the outcomes it commits the Council to delivering over the next three years.
2. That Council approves the Corporate Plan 2024-27 for adoption.

14

COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2025/26

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Director of Finance that presented to Council the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2025/26.

There was a legal requirement to have a local Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme to support residents of working age on a low income who qualify for assistance in paying Council Tax. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 required that each year a billing authority must consider whether to revise its Council Tax Reduction scheme or to replace it with another scheme. Any change to the 2025/26 scheme must be agreed by full Council in line with budget setting arrangements and by no later than 10th March 2025. Any proposed change must be subject to prior consultation with major preceptors (for Oldham this is the Greater Manchester Combined Authority on behalf of the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner) and with the public. The scheme for those of pensionable age is set by the Government and cannot be changed.

A major consultation exercise had not been undertaken regarding changes to the CTR scheme and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority had been provisionally advised that no change to the scheme was proposed. In this regard, the proposal is that the CTR scheme for 2025/26 remains the same as that operating in 2024/25 and, therefore, no consultation exercise would be required. The current CTR scheme provides a maximum reduction equivalent to 85% of the Council Tax charge for a Band A property and this has been unchanged since 2014/15.

There remained uncertainty around the extent that the transition of residents from legacy welfare benefits onto Universal Credit would have on a claimants' household income and how this would then impact on the cost of an income banded scheme if it were to be introduced in 2025/26. The Council cannot currently

accurately determine the level of income those transitioning residents will ultimately receive, which will be critical for an appropriate scheme design.

In view of the continued uncertainty concerning Universal Credit and the marginal impact of any practical change to the CTR scheme at this stage, it is recommended that the Council maintains the current CTR scheme during 2025/26.

RESOLVED:

That the Council approves the proposal, detailed in the submitted report, to keep the Council Tax Reduction Scheme unchanged in 2025/26.

15

SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Councillor McLaren MOVED and Councillor Moores SECONDED a report that provided Council with the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report for the 2023/24 Municipal Year as require by the Council's Constitution, at Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 4.1.

The report outlined the statutory role of overview and scrutiny; the roles and responsibilities of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board, Adults, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board in 2023/24; and a summary of the considerations and work undertaken by the four bodies during 2023/24.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24 be noted.

16

UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Taylor SECONDED a report of the Interim Borough Solicitor which updated members on actions taken following the meeting of the Council held on 11th September 2024 and also on any updated responses from meetings held in the last 12 months.

RESOLVED:

That the actions regarding motions and issues from the meeting of the Council held on 11th September 2024, be noted and confirmed.

17

THE OLDHAM PLAN 2024 – 2030; PRIDE, PROGRESS, PARTNERSHIP

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Jabbar SECONDED the Oldham Plan 2024 – 2030; Pride, Progress, Partnership.

Council was advised that the previous iteration of the Oldham Plan had been adopted by the Oldham Partnership in 2022. However, since this time, the environment in which partners and the council were operating had changed significantly. To reflect these changes, and to coordinate Oldham's Partnerships response with the missions of the new government, a new version of the Oldham Plan (Pride, Progress, Partnership), had

been developed and approved by the Oldham Partnership – Leading Oldham.



Oldham
Council

Council was informed that the Oldham Partnership was a collaboration of leaders from across Oldham, working together to address the borough's challenges. The Oldham Plan was to serve as the blueprint which was going to guide the next six years of the Oldham Partnership. Extensive consultation and resident feedback had shaped the new Plan, with three missions – Healthier, Happier Lives; Great Place to Live; and Green and Growing – each of which were supported by specific deliverables to drive progress and positive change for Oldham's communities.

RESOLVED:

That Council notes the content of the Oldham Plan 2024 – 2030: Pride, Progress, Partnership and in doing so acknowledges the continued work of Oldham Partnership to improve the Borough.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 10.00pm

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