

Amendment - Ethical Investment: Divestment from Fossil Fuels and Arms by the Greater Manchester Pension Fund

Proposed by: Cllr Shaid Mushtaq
Seconded by: Cllr Abdul Jabbar

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This Council notes:

Oldham's Ethical and Climate Leadership:

- In ~~July~~ September 2019, Oldham Council declared a **Climate Emergency**, committing to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2038. As part of this, the Council agreed to encourage the **Greater Manchester Pension Fund (GMPF)** to divest from fossil fuels.

Investments in Fossil Fuels and Arms:

- Approximately **6% of GMPF's portfolio** (around £1.5 billion) is invested in fossil fuel companies such as Shell, BP, and Glencore.
- ~~GMPF also holds over £241 million in arms companies, including BAE Systems, Boeing, and Honeywell, which supply weapons to regimes implicated in human rights abuses and violations of international law, including in Palestine and Yemen.~~
- The GMPF also invests over £241 million in companies such as BAE Systems, Boeing and Caterpillar, which indirectly profit from arms sales to states involved in conflicts including Palestine, Lebanon, the Congo, Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen.

Momentum for Divestment:

- On 1 November 2024, **Manchester City Council** passed a motion calling for GMPF to divest from fossil fuels and arms, joining a growing number of councils across the UK.
- Councils such as **Liverpool, Waltham Forest, Islington, and Inverclyde** have also passed motions demanding divestment from fossil fuels and arms.
- These councils, like Oldham, recognise that investments in fossil fuels and arms are incompatible with their ethical, environmental, and social responsibilities.

Human Rights and Legal Context:

- ~~Arrest warrants issued by international legal bodies against political figures like **Benjamin Netanyahu** for alleged war crimes underline the~~

~~urgent need to ensure public funds are not complicit in human rights violations.~~

- The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants on November 21, 2024, for several high-profile individuals in relation to the situation in Gaza. The warrants were issued for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the conflict by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and Hamas military commander Mohammed Deif .
- ~~Arms companies in GMPF's portfolio supply weapons used in illegal wars, repression, and breaches of international law.~~

Environmental and Financial Risks:

- Fossil fuel investments directly contribute to climate destruction and risk becoming stranded assets as global decarbonisation accelerates.
- Arms manufacturing and deployment result in environmental devastation, the destruction of habitats, and carbon-intensive recovery processes, further exacerbating the climate crisis.

GMPF's Policy Contradiction:

- GMPF's Responsible Investment Policy commits to considering the environmental and social impact of investments, but its holdings in fossil fuels and arms directly contradict this policy.

This Council believes:

1. Investments in fossil fuels and arms perpetuate climate destruction, human suffering, and global instability, making them morally indefensible and financially risky.
2. Divestment aligns with Oldham's commitments to human rights, climate action, and ethical governance, while mitigating financial risks.
3. Arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and Hamas military commander Mohammed Deif ~~figures like Netanyahu~~ emphasise the urgent need to act decisively against complicity in human rights abuses.

This Council resolves to:

1. ~~Demand~~ Step up d ~~Divestment:~~
Request the Leader of the Council to write to GMPF and the Mayor of Greater Manchester, urging GMPF to:
 - within 12 months Ddevelop a clear plan to **divest from fossil fuels** and arms ~~within 12 months~~.

- Align with GMCA's **2038 net-zero target** (instead of GMPF's current 2050 target) and establish a medium-term milestone for 2030.
 - Commit to divesting the millions it invests in companies involved either directly or indirectly in arms production. ~~from arms companies supplying weapons to regimes engaged in breaches of international law and human rights abuses.~~
2. **Ensure Transparency:**
Request GMPF to implement robust and transparent reporting mechanisms, including annual updates on:
 - Investments in fossil fuels, arms, and companies operating in **occupied territories** under as defined in international law.
 - Progress towards divestment ~~and outcomes of company engagements.~~
 3. **Empower Representation:**
Mandate Oldham's representative on GMPF to advocate for divestment from fossil fuels and arms ~~at all meetings~~ and provide regular updates to this Council on progress.
 4. **Collaborate Regionally:**
Request the Leader of the Council to write to the other nine Greater Manchester councils, urging them to join Oldham, Manchester, and other councils in advocating for ethical investment reforms at GMPF.
 5. **Promote Ethical Reinvestment:**
Work with GMPF to explore reinvestment in industries aligned with Oldham's ethical and environmental priorities, such as renewable energy, social housing, and sustainable infrastructure.
 6. **Engage the Public:**
Collaborate with residents, advocacy groups, and trade unions to build awareness and support for ethical investment in Greater Manchester.
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Supporting Statement:

This motion builds on the recent decision by **Manchester City Council**, which joins other councils like **Liverpool, Waltham Forest, Islington, and Inverclyde** in calling for divestment from fossil fuels and arms. Oldham has the opportunity to strengthen its leadership on climate and human rights by standing in solidarity with these councils and advocating for change at GMPF.

Arrest warrants against ~~figures such as Benjamin Netanyahu~~ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and Hamas military commander Mohammed Deif for alleged war crimes highlight the moral imperative to ensure public investments are not complicit in such acts. Divesting from fossil fuels and arms not only addresses these ethical concerns but also aligns with our fiduciary responsibility to mitigate financial risks and support sustainable, long-term investments.

By supporting this motion, Oldham Council can reaffirm its commitment to ethical governance, climate action, and human rights, paving the way for a more sustainable and just future.

Amended motion to read:

This Council notes:

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