

# Public Document Pack

**COUNCIL**  
**18/12/2024 at 6.00 pm**



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

Councillors Adams, Akhtar, Al-Hamdani, M Ali, Z Ali, Arnott, Aslam, Azad, Ball, Bashforth, Bishop, Brownridge, Byrne, Charters, Chauhan, Chowhan, Cosgrove, Davis, Dean, Ghafoor, Goodwin, Hamblett, Harkness, Harrison, Hince, Hindle, Hobin, Hughes, A Hussain, F Hussain, J. Hussain, S. Hussain, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Islam, Jabbar, Kenyon, Kouser, Lancaster, Malik, Marland, McLaren, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Nasheen, 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 Councillors Hurley and Navesey.

2. **MINUTES**

Council considered the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and the Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

The Mayor, Councillor Chauhan MOVED and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Moores SECONDED that the Council meeting be adjourned until Monday, 20th January 2025 at 6.00 p.m. due to the behaviour of some Members within the Council Chamber, during proceedings.

On being put to the VOTE, the MOTION was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council meeting be adjourned until Monday, 20th January 2025 at 6.00 p.m.

The meeting started at 6.00 p.m. and was adjourned at 8.25pm.

**COUNCIL**  
**20/01/2025 (reconvened) at 6.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillor Moores (Deputy Mayor) in the Chair

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

1        **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from the Mayor (Councillor Chauhan),  
Councillor Adams and Councillor Sharp.

2        **MINUTES**

Council considered the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting  
held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and the Minutes of the ordinary  
meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, 8.4(k) it was  
MOVED that this Council meeting be adjourned until Monday,  
20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 6.00 p.m.

On being put to the VOTE, the MOTION was CARRIED  
UNANIMOUSLY.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council meeting be adjourned until  
Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 6.00 p.m.

On the meeting being reconvened, on 20<sup>th</sup> January the Deputy Mayor advised that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 had been circulated previously with the agenda pack.

At the meeting of the Council, on 18<sup>th</sup> December (prior to the adjournment), Councillor Ghafoor had referred to inaccuracies in the minutes of the meeting held 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024, (minute 9 refers) therefore, an updated version of these minutes had been circulated around the Chamber, for members' information.

At the meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024, the Liberal Democrats had requested an amendment to the minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> November meeting which they felt reflected the Places for Everyone discussion. The proposed amendment had been checked against the meeting's transcript and the text of the report and the amendment could not procedurally be accepted as an accurate record of the debate. Therefore, the minutes remained as printed in the updated version issued that had been circulated to council for agreement.

However, the Deputy Mayor noted that in July 2024 the Council debated a Motion proposing a request to the Secretary of State to revoke the Places for Everyone plan for houses and jobs as it relates to Oldham. Instead, Council approved an amended motion, the resolution, which required officers to provide a further report back to council.

A series of member workshops were held in September 2024 and subsequently a further report was presented to council in November 2024. That report recommended that Council did not write to the Secretary of State and it did not include either a recommendation or an option to write requesting that revocation.

While the report was not supported by Council, Council was not given the opportunity to vote to write to the Secretary of State. However, as a result and following external legal advice, the deputy Mayor confirmed that no resolution has yet been taken by Council to write to the Secretary of State.

For this matter to be taken further, a new motion or report would need to be brought to Council for consideration and decision.

A recorded vote, in line with Council Procedure Rules was taken on the accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024, as follows:

<b>COUNCILLOR</b>		<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	
Adams Christine	APOLOGIES	Hussain Junaid	FOR
Akhtar Shoab	ABSTAINED	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	Moores 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	FOR
Dean Peter	FOR	Quigg Lewis	AGAINST
Ghafoor Kamran	AGAINST	Rustidge Ken	FOR
Goodwin Chris	FOR	Shah Arooj	FOR
Hamblett Louie	AGAINST	Sharp Beth	APOLOGIES
Harkness Garth	AGAINST	Sheldon Graham	AGAINST
Harrison Holly	FOR	Shuttleworth Graham	FOR
Hince Marc	FOR	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)	APOLOGIES

On a recorded VOTE being taken 30 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 being approved as a correct record with 26 VOTES cast AGAINST and there was 1 ABSTENTION. The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were therefore APPROVED as a correct record.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 be approved as correct records.

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

The Deputy Mayor informed the meeting that due to the receipt of several enquiries from Members, the Interim Borough Solicitor had granted a dispensation that permitted all members to participate in the discussion and voting on Item 11 (Motion 2 – Ethical Investment: Divestment from Fossil Fuels and Arms by the Greater Manchester Pension Fund), which is being proposed by the Oldham Group.

There were no other declarations of interests.

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

The Deputy Mayor advised that the Conservative Group had withdrawn their Amendments to the two Motions detailed at agenda item 10 (Notice of Administration Business).

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

The Deputy Mayor referred to the recent death of former Councillor Alan Griffiths, who represented the Shaw Ward between 1986 and 2002 and who served as Mayor of the Borough in 1986/87. Accordingly, Councillors Sykes, Dean, Hince and Williamson addressed Council paying their individual condolences and tributes.

Council held a minute's silence in memory of former Councillor Griffiths.

Council was advised that Councillor Graham Sheldon had left the Conservative Group and would henceforth sit as an Independent Member. Councillor Byrne was the interim Leader of the Conservative Group.

The Deputy Mayor permitted Councillor Woodvine to address the meeting, who offered a full apology for his behaviour and comments made at the meetings of the Council held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025 (prior to the adjournment).

The Deputy Mayor permitted Councillor Hince to address the meeting, who offered a full apology for his behaviour and comments made at the meetings of the Council held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025 (prior to the adjournment).

The Deputy Mayor advised the meeting that two groups of survivors and their advocates, had asked that two short statements be read out at this meeting. Accordingly, on behalf of the two groups of survivors the Deputy Mayor read out the two separate short statements.

#### Statement 1

The past few months have been very difficult time for us since the decision was made for Oldham to run their own independent inquiry. In addition to this, the past 2 weeks have been even

more stressful, triggering and upsetting, having to watch the world's media descend on our small town, over such an emotive and extremely personal issue.



Senior politicians have been making decisions on our lives and who they are aiming to try to find a solution to suitably address the suffering and exploitation, the victims and survivors have endured in Oldham for decades. We are aware we'll never see a decision that everyone will agree on.

Whilst we hoped for and continue to fight for a national inquiry, we appreciate they have come up with a compromise. Whilst we'll continue to fight for a victims led national enquiry, for now, we are satisfied that our voices are finally being heard, although we will continue the fight in a way that works for us, to lobby for changes we feel are necessary in shaping a suitable inquiry. Our biggest priority is to hope we can achieve that it be a statutory one.

Our whole ordeal has been traumatic enough, without the extra stress and agitation of having to watch media footage, containing claims of help and actions that didn't happen and that we have not received. We've even been put in the position where certain media interviews are talking on matters that directly concern us without prior warning, consultation or agreed involvement. It's caused a decline in our mental health and had a serious knock-on effect to our children and families. We don't take kindly to this, having already feeling unheard for so many years. Those that have assisted us have stayed firmly out of the spotlight, remaining supportive and providing us with the help we need.

We hope as a town now that we can start on a new journey and let the ones doing the real work behind the scenes continue and try to bring some closure and answers for those desperately in need. We are hoping for and seeking a peaceful time whilst things unfold.

### Statement 2

Early last week ourselves, Samantha and Jamie-Leigh attended a meeting with Kemi Badenoch, following that meeting we met with Jess Phillips. After much consideration we are still not happy with the overall decision but are happy to continue with a local Telford inquiry. Going forward we have multiple meetings with MP's and officials. We are currently in talks with numerous survivors and are currently in the process of setting up a survivors committee where survivors and only survivors have a voice, we are also in the process of setting up a family support group, so families have equal support.

Moving forward we hope the Council remain transparent and politics are kept aside and the far-right stop using this for their own agenda. As we move forward us survivors and victims' need to be kept updated throughout each stage of the process regardless of how little it may be.



Please can members of the public remain respectful as this is solely about survivors and victims. Survivors and victims are the start and heart of this inquiry. Thank you for your understanding.

**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**

The Deputy Mayor informed Members that the Youth Council's Motion was to be deferred to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

**8 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

**1. Question from Shona Farnworth**

What are the plans for accessible homes for those with visible and non- visible disabilities as we the public do not know what the plans are around the lack of accessible homes stock within the council as the Tommyfield market should become this space?

Councillor Taylor, Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Decent Homes replied, thanking Ms Farnworth for her question, noting that all newly constructed dwellings have to be built to the 'accessible and adaptable' standards by law, so new homes being built will be easier to adapt for use by those with visible and non-visible disabilities.

The Council's Local Plan is in the final stages of development and may include further planning policies to provide homes specifically for those with disabilities, and we would welcome input and suggestions on how this could be done as we progress through the final stages on consultation.

Councillor Taylor undertook to email Ms Farnworth about her specific ideas and suggestions so we can review them as part of this ongoing work.

**2. Question from Lewis Farnworth**

What Support for Full time unpaid carers as the government budget left out full time unpaid carers living on £81.90 for 90+ hours a week care we provide as we are struggling. We have to choose whether to pay bills or eat?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Health, Social care and Wellbeing replied, thanking Mr Farnworth for his question, adding that the Council has a strong commitment to carers to support them in their caring role.

We have put together a comprehensive package of support to make sure that no Oldhamer goes hungry or cold this Winter. We have used Household Support Funding from the Government to bolster our offer. This includes funding our Warm Homes Team to provide emergency fuel vouchers for pre-paid meters and to provide advice and guidance on reducing energy consumption. We have also invested in emergency supermarket vouchers to support residents to purchase food and essential

items as well as funding Oldham Foodbank to maintain stock levels.

We will contact Mr Farnworth and offer support for schemes that he is eligible for this winter.

Additional support for carers includes support from the carers service who are able to complete an updated Carers assessment. An option to contact Adult Social Care for the cared for to request or a reassessment if it is felt this appropriate. It is also advisable to contact Age UK/ Citizens Advice Bureau/DWP to check you are on the right benefits and if there are any additional support services you can approach. However, I reiterate our message of support this winter, please don't hesitate to call our Helpline on 0161 770 7007.

### 3. Question from Phillida Ship

Can the Cabinet Member for Decent Homes explain what the process would be for developing a new Local Plan if Oldham withdraws from Places for Everyone?

How long would it take from starting the process again to the adoption of a Plan and how much would it cost?

What restraints would there be on developers applying to build on Green Belt and Local Green Spaces while the Local Plan is being drawn up.

Councillor Taylor, Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Decent Homes replied thanking Phillida Ship for her question.

If Places for Everyone was revoked for Oldham, the Council would need to start a brand-new Local Plan which could need to include the new higher housing and employment targets set by Government.

This new approach would involve several stages of public consultation starting with a fresh call for sites and a review of the Green Belt, because there is not enough brownfield land available to meet the new requirements. We would need to consult on the options and opportunities, then again on the draft plan, and then again on the final plan before submission for examination and adoption.

Overall, this process would likely last a minimum of 5 years depending on the feedback and engagement from the different consultation stages.

With regards to the costs for producing a new plan – this would be in the region of about £500,000 (five hundred thousand pounds / half a million pounds) for the evidence base and examination, with additional costs for officer time over this time period.

In the meantime, without PfE, the council would not be able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and so even Green Belt and local green spaces would potentially be vulnerable to applications for housing development if they demonstrate that they are sustainable.

### 4. Question from Mike Rooke

I read in the Mill that Cllr Sykes in justifying his support for withdrawing from Places for Everyone said "I'd like to think we have all these people sitting on the boundary of Oldham waiting



for this to happen... But we haven't. If we were in a place where we had plenty of developers and planning applications, I'd be a lot more worried."

Can the Cabinet Member for Decent Homes confirm which developers made representations at the Planning Enquiry seeking to get sites currently protected from development included or extended?



Councillor Taylor, Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Decent Homes replied, thanking Mike Rooke for his question. Be in no doubt - big developers are licking their lips at the thought of Oldham being out of PfE.

There is prime greenbelt across Oldham that could be developed at the click of the fingers, with no consideration of proper infrastructure which we could be powerless to prevent. What is happening in Liberal Democrat Stockport is simply a glimmer of what could happen in Oldham where there is so much more green space that is easy to develop without the protection of PfE.

The developers aren't keeping this secret as you can see their responses to planning inquiry for Places for Everyone.

#### 5. Question from Hannah Roberts

Everyone agrees that the priorities for Oldham are to build on previously developed land – Brownfield sites – and increase the numbers of affordable and social homes. Oldham Council has increased the number of brownfield sites in the Town Centre and by adopting the Mills Strategy.

Are there other brownfield sites that haven't already been identified and included in the SHLAA and Places for Everyone?

And what is the projected land supply over the next 10 years compared with the revised housing targets?

Where will these homes be built if brownfield sites don't exist?

Councillor Taylor, Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Decent Homes replied thanking Hannah Roberts for her question.

Every year the council updates the following documents - the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), the Brownfield Land Register and the Housing Land Supply - to ensure that they reflect the most up to date position and feedback from landowners, developers and agents.

As part of this process, new sites may be added if they are considered deliverable and developable, including those submitted through the council's open Call for Sites. Including numerous calls for brownfield sites to be put forward during the many rounds of consultation for Places for Everyone, and no sites were put forward by those who are incorrectly claiming we can meet our targets without building on the greenbelt.

As of 1 April 2024, there was land to accommodate approximately 8,230 homes over the next 10 years (including greenfield sites). This figure drops to only 6,048 homes when including sites that are brownfield (or part brownfield).

The Government adopted a new standard method for calculating housing requirements last week, and these would require Oldham to deliver 910 homes a year, which equates to 9,100

homes over ten years. This is significantly higher than the average annual requirement under Places for Everyone (680 homes a year).

As both the adopted Places for Everyone housing requirement and the Government's new housing requirement cannot be met on deliverable and developable brownfield sites alone, Oldham has to enable development on greenfield sites as well to ensure there is enough housing for all, and there would be increased pressure on our protected open spaces and Green Belt land under the new housing requirement.

#### 6. Question from Dominic Wall

Can the Cabinet Member for Decent Homes estimate the cost to Oldham of turning down planning applications for housing which are later approved at appeal? Is it possible to say, for example, what the cost to the Council would be of turning down an application to build on Hanging Chadder which was later approved at appeal?

Councillor Taylor, Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Decent Homes replied, thanking Dominic Wall for his question.

It is not possible to accurately estimate what appeal costs may be, as each planning application is different and the application for costs by an appellant will vary depending on the specific matters covered in an appeal and whether the appeal is heard by a Public Inquiry or not.

However, where an application involves a large housing development, and the appeal is held through a public inquiry, it would be expected that appeal costs would usually involve six figure sums (hundreds of thousands of pounds) if the appeal is upheld (and the Council decision is overturned) and the costs are awarded against the Council.

#### 7. Question from Kathryn Phillips

Can the Cabinet Member for Decent Homes confirm what would happen to the 97.5% of Oldham's Greenbelt currently protected by Places for Everyone if Oldham withdraws from the plan?

Councillor Taylor, Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Decent Homes replied, thanking Kathryn Phillips for her question.

Currently 97.5% of our beautiful greenbelt land is protected under PfE. If we withdraw, all of it is under threat. We can see what is happening in Stockport - our land is so much better here in Oldham and developers are licking their lips at the chance to build, build, build.

The protection is lost because it means we wouldn't have an up-to-date development plan and we would need to create a new one. This would take a minimum of five years.

In the meantime we would be expected to deliver more homes than what is under Places for Everyone due to the protection as explained in an earlier question – putting even more greenbelt at risk.

#### 8. Question from Diane Wrall

Could the relevant cabinet member please tell me why even if people object to large masts being put in certain locations, the permitted developments still ride rough shod over residents' voices in this borough?

Also why is it that officers of this council who apparently work for us and the borough, quite happily have weekly meetings with IX, but feel that it isn't necessary or want to meet with residents who are rightly concerned about this issue and about IX acting as has been found out in the past in contravention to Health and Safety laws?

Councillor Taylor, Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Decent Homes replied thanking Diane Wraill for her question. This is a complicated area of planning law, but essentially our hands are tied as – in summary – the national rules about these permitted development rights means that there are only very specific circumstances where we can intervene.

All of the details on this are on our website if you want to understand the technicalities of this.

What we absolutely have done is to ensure that where IX Wireless have been doing things which are unsafe we have suspended their work until they make it right.

With regards to meetings with residents, this does happen as both Officers and Councillors have met with various local residents when it has been needed. Officers and Councillors also engage extensively on email with residents. We acknowledge the local frustrations and concerns being raised, and to try explain where we can do so.

#### 9. Question from Peter Webb

I would like to ask the relevant cabinet member the following question,

Back in May 2024, I voted for my local Labour councillor based on the promise made in a leaflet distributed to residents of North Chadderton.

The leaflet stated that £50,000 would be allocated for road safety improvements around St. Herbert's School and the cemetery on Middleton Road.

It has now been six months since the councillor's re-election, and residents, including parents, have yet to hear any updates on these plans.

Could you please confirm if any progress has been made or if there are concrete plans to follow through on this commitment? Or was this simply a pre-election promise with no intention of being fulfilled?

Additionally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and commend St. Herbert's School for their proactive efforts in keeping children safe in the absence of these promised improvements. Would the council join me in congratulating the school for their initiative?

Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham replied, thanking Mr Webb for his question.

Taking your points in reverse order, many thanks for commending the work being undertaken by St Herbert's School, which of course the Council will endorse.

I can confirm that progress is being made to review the road safety concerns around this school. Council officers have been communicating with Ward Members and St Herbert's School directly on the various options available to tackle the concerns being raised.

Officers are currently developing the details of the road safety scheme and public consultation on the proposals will commence early in the new year.

We will ensure there is an update provided to parents via the school newsletter and can I ask Ward members to assist with ensuring local residents are kept informed of progress please.

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

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## **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 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and the Minutes of the meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

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

#### **Question 1: Place for Everyone**

I want to ask about something that we debated on the minutes the council meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November when Members voted by 30 to 29 to write to the Secretary of State, calling for Oldham to be removed from Places for Everyone. Everyone in the chamber knew what that vote was that's the way they spoke it was clear from the speeches on both the Labour side and opposition members there was no doubt what people thought they were voting for and instead of honouring or being weaselled out of a democratic decision made by the Council, the Administration has used what looks like every trick in the book to avoid writing to the Secretary of State and they think they're being clever just like they think they're being clever with at least four planted labour questions about this very same issue.

Mr Deputy Mayor is it the Labour group's policy that the council will have to vote and debate once again, the issue of Places for Everyone before they write to the Secretary of State just because they didn't like the result last time?

Councillor Shah Leader of the Council replied, thank you Councillor Sykes for your question however I do think there's some irony in this like so there's if there's something about and a common theme that runs across the chamber it's when people don't like the outcome of something they like to say it's a conspiracy or it's wrong but actually um you've actually given me an opportunity to set the matter straight um to which I'm really thankful for again. So, I have to say that I've actually had no involvement in the procedure around the decision not to write to

the Deputy Prime Minister to request that we withdraw from places for everyone it's very clear that the administration agrees with Places for Everyone however the report before Council, on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024, didn't actually mandate officers to write to the Deputy Prime Minister to request the removal of Oldham for Places for Everyone. The vote was on the recommendations contained in the submitted report.



#### Question 2: Social Care:

My second question, I think, is equally as serious since about the winter crisis and the problems we're encountering in Social Care, Mr Deputy Mayor. The NHS is facing it's not a double whammy it's not a triple whammy it's a quadruple whammy in terms of the respiratory diseases that people are getting. I understand it in terms of another winter crisis, ambulance services being in chaos; I had the joys of visiting Oldham's Hospital recently and the whole of the ambulance bay was full as we were still waiting to offload patients and find somewhere for them to be even if that was on a corridor. The pressure on social care is mounting there's some evidence from earlier this week, I read, that nearly a third of people in hospital are in hospital because they're waiting for somewhere to be discharged to and that's not the fault of our social care it's the fact that successive governments have kicked the can down the road.

Social care services in Oldham are under extreme financial pressures, Mr Deputy Mayor but what's really dangerous is the impact that this Labour government's National Insurance hike could have on our services if common sense doesn't prevail. More essential services will disappear from view for those who rely on them, so, I ask the Leader tonight, if she agrees is it time for her government to work with other parties to sort this out and does she agree that it's important is that people get care based on need and not on what they can afford to pay?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council replied, everyone in the Chamber can entirely agree with we know that adult social care is under increased pressure. We know it's a huge significant budget challenge not just for this Council but for councils across the country and we also know that the issues around the NHS and how all of its unintended consequences add to all the other pressures that we're actually facing out in our communities as well and we're all in agreement as well that actually not resolving any of this isn't helpful to anyone. The previous government bears significant responsibility for this because they left the current government with a significant mess.

The cross-party LGA are calling for greater understanding and for greater funding. I am hopeful that this will happen. The Leader agreed to give Councillor Sykes a more detailed response, to his question which she will submit to him in writing.

#### Question from Councillor Ghafoor

I think it's very important that we talk about child sexual exploitation. We have all been disgusted by the exploitation and rape of the most vulnerable children in society every victim must



be heard and appropriate legal action must be taken against the perpetrators, whoever they are. As a group of Muslim councillors, we in the Oldham Group, feel that the perpetrators should be punished with the worst and longest punishments available.

We know that now that many of these vile individuals were never investigated due to the failings of our institutions whether they were the police, social services, children's care home or safeguarding teams. In many cases these institutions failed vulnerable white girls for decades, these children were sometimes blamed or shamed or ignored by the very people paid by the taxpayers to protect them.

My question to Councillor Shah is, will the Oldham inquiry be judge led, similar to the Telford inquiry, to ensure Independence and credibility? Will you commit to Consulting the full Council chamber to reach a consensus on the terms of reference for the inquiry ensuring a broad and transparent scope will the terms of reference explicitly include all relevant institutions such as the Police, Social Services, Council departments, politicians, children's care homes and safeguarding teams to ensure systematic failings are comprehensively addressed? Will you ensure that this inquiry is given full legal powers to enforce compliance including access to any document or evidence that it requires, and finally can you confirm that the inquiry will examine both historical and recent cases of institutional failings to identify systematic issues and propose actionable safeguards for the future?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council replied, saying that she was disappointed that notice hadn't been taken of the survivors' statements that had been given earlier in the meeting asking that politics needs to be taken out of this.

The Home Secretary, last week, made a statement in the House of Commons about sexual abuse and exploitation of children that there must be recognition that survivors have suffered the most horrific form of abuse and that there must be an absolute commitment to protect children from abuse now and in the future. Councillor Shah added that listening to the voices of survivors and the protection of children which must be the driving force behind the independent inquiry that will be set up. The request for the inquiry actually came from local survivors who were affected and who felt that the previous Assurance Review had not given them an opportunity to have their voices heard or put forward their individual testimonies and experiences examined. The Leader reassured the meeting that, since the summer, Oldham Council had been working with a group of survivors and those affected by child sexual exploitation to discuss how they could help shape a further local inquiry.

The Home Secretary announced last week, that she will appoint Judge Crowther, to lead the inquiry, having previously led the Telford Inquiry. Survivors are happy with this because they have observed how the Telford Inquiry was conducted. I am confident that this will provide additional assurance to survivors and that they will be at the heart of the inquiry. The recent home office



announcement also said that that there would be additional government support and additional funding and we, as a Council, will continue to have discussions with government about funding the inquiry and how it will progress but one thing that I am also proud of is that as of now and thanks to these survivors, we'll be shaping how future survivor led inquiries across the country, will happen.

Question from Councillor Byrne

I would like to ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Shah, if you will confirm whether you would support the following you've covered quite a bit of the area but this is more specific. Will you support our call for a national inquiry, into Pakistani heritage rape gangs who have groomed children, not just in Oldham but in the whole of the UK? Will you confirm the timeline for the local inquiry into the historic cases of child sexual exploitation in Oldham and can you confirm that the inquiry in Oldham does not exclude any Council officer's councillors or members of the Council who were and are still employed by the council? Will the Leader of the Council demand that the Prime Minister apologise for claiming that those fighting for justice are far-right?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council replied that once more I have to apologise to the survivors, who made their statements at the start of this Council meeting. I think it is really unacceptable that we keep drawing this out and trying to use it politically. It is unfair, it is also disrespectful. The only voice that matters is theirs and they've made it clear they don't want to hear from me they don't want to hear from anyone else and they don't want anyone to try to politically point score. What I'm not going to accept though is any kind of division. Perpetrators, like I said in my statement, come from all backgrounds - religion and race don't come into it.

I will not ask the prime minister to apologise for his comments. He takes his responsibilities seriously, just like every single member in this chamber should and that is why we should unite and bring communities and people together. I have said previously that we need to look at drivers in certain communities to see what drives them and what drives those patterns of behaviours. We need to look at that that is important but actually abuse does not discriminate everybody is affected by this and we have to like use this and accept what the survivors have asked of us.

b. Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member  
for Decent Homes

The Deputy Leader and Decent Homes Portfolio Holder presented her report.

Question from Councillor Harkness - I understand that the Government is looking to introduce a legal responsibility for Councils to provide accommodation for veterans in locations where they have links to a community. However, those plans appear to provide no additional funding to enable this housing to be provided. While the principle of this is to be lauded, is this another instance of central Government passing responsibility

for issues onto local councils without the required funding, leaving council taxpayers in Oldham faced the bill, when the country as a whole should be ensuring that veterans get the support and housing that they deserve?

Councillor Taylor replied stating that Members may be aware that Veterans already have priority need for the Council's Housing register.

You might have also seen today that the Government has announced the biggest ever increase in funding for homelessness prevention services to council, and we expect Oldham will benefit significantly from this new money. So no I disagree with the premise of Cllr Harkness' question, the government has already put their money where their mouth is. We will continue to support veterans in the same way as all our residents through advice, guidance and housing support.

Question from Councillor Arnott seeking an update on properties at Union Street in Royton.

Councillor Taylor replied that the Council was aware that number 12 Union Street had been converted into a number of flats.

A letting agent had been in touch with us offering the units for temporary accommodation – as is often the case, we get offers from letting agents regarding property across the borough every week.

While we are always in need of homes and properties to meet our Temporary Accommodation needs, we must always consider the price, the suitability and the appropriateness of the facilities.

We have not entered into a conversation with the letting agent in question regarding the property on union street, however this be considered and will follow standard processes at the appropriate time.

Question from Councillor Harrison - The Cabinet Member's report outlines good progress in delivering a brownfield first policy and much need affordable and specialist homes. However, too many families are waiting for permanent homes in temporary accommodation this Christmas – can Cllr Taylor explain what changes are planned to reduce the numbers of people needing temporary accommodation mentioned in her report?

Councillor Taylor replied that one of the Council's priorities was to reduce the need for Temporary Accommodation: however, this sort of change will take time as there are simply neither enough suitable nor enough affordable homes for Oldham's residents.

Therefore, in the meantime a range of solutions have been accelerated since we declared a number of local solutions to the national housing crisis to ensure that we are able to provide quality temporary accommodation facilities for residents in need. This includes projects like the SHAP - the Single Homelessness Accommodation Project - at Foundry Street; new contracts with providers who can provide access to more suitable and affordable properties; the refurbishment of existing Council

premises; and, where appropriate the strategic acquisition of properties.

In response to the housing crisis, we have been working closely with private landlords, developers and social housing providers to accelerate the delivery of new housing across the borough. This work has included accelerating the delivery of new homes on Council owned sites such as Southlink and South Chadderton. A key aspect of these housing plans is the accelerated provision of the 500 truly affordable homes over the next 5 years. Finally, the housing team are now taking a more prevention led approach to support our residents who find themselves at risk of homelessness when eviction notices or properties are condemned on safety grounds, to help residents stay in their homes while the concerns and issues are resolved.

c. Councillor Jabbar Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Value for Money and Sustainability

The Deputy Leader and Value for Money and Sustainability Portfolio Holder presented his report.

Question from Councillor Islam - Can the Cabinet Member explain what the benefits to residents will be of the successful a bid to GMCA to fund digital inclusion work across the borough with the aim of increasing access to digital support closer to home?

Councillor Jabbar replied that he was delighted to share that following a successful bid to GMCA, we will be receiving 70k funding in early January with the specific remit of increasing the number of Oldham residents who can access digital support within 15 minutes of home.

Building on our comprehensive Library offer, we are using the funding to embed a partnership approach across the borough together with Inclusive Bytes CIC. Over the 6-month funding period, Inclusive Bytes will be working with partners and across the VFCSE sector to set up digital hubs and a digital champions network so that residents can get digital help closer to where they live. Inclusive Bytes will be providing training to support this as well as online resources and mapping to show how and where to get support.

Further information will be available in early 2025. I'm delighted that we have been successful in obtaining this much needed funding and I know that it will make a big difference for residents who need support to get online.

Question from Councillor Ghafoor – could the Portfolio Holder clarify the Council's financial undertaking in respect of work that MUSE are carrying out on behalf of the Council and if the associated legal advice could be published?

Councillor Jabbar replied that this issue had been considered at length at a meeting of the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani - Council has announced the upcoming departure of the Chief Finance Officer, effective from January.

In the run up to the Budget-setting Council Meeting for 2025/26, how confident is the Cabinet Member that this change in senior

leadership within his directorate will not have any adverse impact on Oldham Borough's finances?

Councillor Jabbar replied that he did not consider that the imminent departure of the Director of Finance would have an adverse impact on the Council's finances. The Director of Finance leaves at the end of January at which point budget setting will be very advanced. Throughout the process she will have been supported by her very able Assistant Directors, who will provide continuity throughout the rest of the process whilst we appoint a replacement.

d. Councillor Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People presented his report.

Question from Councillor Aslam - the Labour Government's Plan for Change includes a milestone of 75% of five-year-olds being school ready. How is Oldham performing against this target and what is the plan to achieve or exceed it?

Councillor Mushtaq replied that Oldham's Good Level of Development (GLD) at the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) increased from 62.8% in 2023 to 63.6% in 2024. This was a larger improvement than nationally and the gap between Oldham and the National position has continued to narrow from 7.4% in 2018 to 4.1% in 2024. A plan of support to continue to improve outcomes for children at the end of EYFS is in place through schools and our Family Hubs to support the home learning environment and speech and language development.

Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani - At the September meeting of Council, Councillor Mushtaq announced that the Council was reviewing the residential model for children's homes and creating another three homes for a further 7 placements, which would deliver 20 council run placements over the next three years. At the same time, Greater Manchester has introduced its Project Skyline, to introduce 10 children's homes across Greater Manchester that can accommodate 24 children. In the report received by the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, there was no information on either of these two projects, although I would like to commend officers for their work towards delivering an initial three houses. So, could the Cabinet member confirm that the further 7 placements are going ahead; on what date this will start; and whether this is separate to the Project Skyline children's homes which are being delivered?

Councillor Mushtaq replied that he could confirm that an additional 8 placements will be delivered in 2025/26 across three new council run children's homes with the first home on track to open from April 2025 for 4 placements whilst progress continues on homes 2 and 3. As outlined at the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board the creation of new children's homes can take a minimum of 12 months due to a significant number of factors and inter-dependencies including property search, purchase, procurement and delivery of refurbishment work, change of use, resident engagement Ofsted

registration, workforce recruitment and training, preparing the home environment, and matching and placing children and young people.

Greater Manchester Regional Care Cooperative (RCC) as one of two National Pathfinders are delivering project skyline to create 24 new placements in 10 new children's homes across GM. These placements are separate to those being created by Oldham Council and will be available for all 10 LAs in GM to place children and young people locally close to their communities and networks.

Question from Councillor Malik - Councillor Mushtaq's reports confirms the progress Oldham has made in improving Children's Services and outlines what more we need to work on. The horrific abuse suffered by Sara Shariff highlights yet again why vulnerable children need protection. How will councillors and residents know progress is being made in the Achieving Excellence strategy and improvement plan?

Councillor Mushtaq replied that this was a tragic national case, and we welcome the government strengthening multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and having oversight of elective home education.

The Achieving Excellence strategy and improvement plan has been shared with Ofsted and progress will be monitored by them through focused visits as part of Ofsted Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework.

The Strategic Director of Children's Services chairs fortnightly meetings to maintain progress on the delivery of actions.

Quarterly progress reports are provided to the independently chaired Achieving Excellence Board and to me at my Children and Young People portfolio, highlights will be included in my council reports.

Bi-annual progress reports are scrutinised by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board.

e. Councillor Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills presented his report

Question from Councillor Lancaster - since our last Council Meeting, the Partnership Week which seeks to promote and encourage close working between independent and state schools has been held. Locally, I attended an event with my alma mater, Hulme Grammar School, and Briscoe Lane Academy from the neighbouring local authority area, to learn about their sharing of resources, facilities, and best practice, to aide the academic and personal development of students, particularly those from poorer backgrounds. With the public policy climate for independent schools being challenging at present, to say the least, can the Cabinet Member please detail any additional actions which Oldham Council could take to improve partnerships between all types of schools across our Borough, and to maximise opportunity for local pupils?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied that Oldham Council encouraged collaboration between all of the settings, schools, academies



and colleges educating our children and young people. We do this through regular communications with the whole sector, hosting the independently chaired Oldham Learning Partnership and providing some universal and other traded services to these establishments.

Hulme Grammar School and other provisions in our borough provide an option for those residents who choose to access independent education. These independent schools will be operating in a more challenging environment in the New Year, so I will encourage our officers to consider additional support to improve collaboration between schools to maximise opportunity for local children. Oldham Learning Board does not currently have a representative from the independent sector, so I will ask for this to be rectified and hope that they can contribute to the work in addressing the current borough priorities in SEND, attendance, literacy and workforce.

Question from Councillor Iqbal - There have been national challenges in Speech and language development in the early years for the past decade and I welcome the reduction in waiting times for speech and language therapy. Can the Cabinet Member explain how this has been achieved and whether further improvements in accessing this service are planned? Councillor Mohon Ali replied that the waiting list for children and young people to access the Speech and Language Therapy service has reduced from around 1,800 at summer 2023 to below 750 currently.

This significant improvement has been achieved by additional investment into this NHS service by both the Oldham Integrated Care Partnership and Oldham Council. In addition to this the Start for Life and Family Hubs programme has invested £390,000 in early intervention and prevention to supporting early language by funding the Early Years Better Communication Team and commissioning work in schools and early years settings to build capacity within the workforce to support early language development and support early identification of need. Significant work with families has also been funded. The SALT service is now delivering clinics within our Family Hubs and in local schools to support easier access to specialist support and reduce missed appointments.

I acknowledge that some families are still waiting too long to access this service, and we are working with colleagues in the NHS to further strengthen and develop this service.

f. Councillor Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member for Enterprise  
The Cabinet member for Enterprise presented his report.

Question from Councillor Murphy - does the council have any plans to encourage small businesses to tender for council contracts, especially those below 25k by joining other GM council like Stockport and Trafford on the STAR Procurement portal, recently highlighted by GM Federation of Small Business?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied that the initiative to which you refer is a pilot that is being run by STAR procurement on behalf of its members with the Federation of Small Businesses.



Unfortunately as we are not a member of STAR Procurement we can't access this.

However we absolutely value our local small suppliers and when we updated our Contract Procedure Rules we amended them to allow more flexibility and targeting of local suppliers. The updated CPRs go into this in much more detail and I would be more than happy to share more specific detail in a written response.

Question from Councillor Sajed Hussain - Could the Cabinet Member give me some examples of practical outcomes for Oldham businesses from the GM LINK programme Cisco Demo Day? And could Cllr Hussain explain further the support for businesses available at the Hive?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied that located on the upper floor of the Spindles, the Hive is a place where businesses can access practical information, advice and guidance. It is a place for businesses to network, collaborate, share ideas and do business with each other.

The Hive also hosts a range of business events such as the Cisco Demo Day last week. This is a GM wide programme that enables start-ups and SME's to respond to a number of challenges through innovative solutions.

At the Cisco Demo Day hosted in Oldham at the Hive last week, 10 businesses showcased potential solutions for mental health care and decarbonisation of public sector buildings.

As a direct result of this session Cisco are attending Oldham Strategic Estates Group in the New Year so we can explore ways to make energy savings, reduce operational costs and support sustainability goals through these innovative local businesses.

Holding these type of regional business events is great for the reputation of our Borough, and they really help to showcase the Hive as a place to collaborate, innovate and do business in a socially responsible way.

Question from Councillor Arnott seeking clarification on apprenticeship schemes in the borough of Oldham?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied that in September 2024, the Government had announced its intention to reshape how the apprenticeship levy will work. Skills England is reviewing where the key skills gaps are and will work with employers to create new frameworks which will include foundation apprenticeships that will support more young people to get into good work by creating stepping stones into intermediate, advanced and higher apprenticeships. This will see the Apprenticeship Levy change into a new "growth and skills levy" which will be more responsive for businesses and young people.

We are committed to ensuring our young people and our business community can access the right skills provision to grow our economy.

We are continuously reviewing our approach to enhancing our offer for apprenticeships in the council to ensure we are creating opportunities for residents. We are aiming to create a clear talent pipeline for every service, to build on the successes we have seen with the Social Work Academy model which has seen

us recruit 42 Social Worker degree apprentices, to provide routes into the council for young people within the borough. This will also include an expansion on our existing offer with other early career pathways such as T Level's, Work Experience and Graduate Programmes. We are also focusing on how we can specifically support disadvantaged young people in the borough to achieve their potential. A positive example of this was our involvement with the Care Leavers' Summer Jobs programme that has resulted in a council apprenticeship for one of the young people. We have committed to running another placement scheme and we are constantly reviewing all avenues where we can remove barriers to support our young people.

g. Councillor Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults Health and Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member for Adults Health and Wellbeing presented er report.

Question from Councillor Bashforth - can Councillor Brownridge explain which Providers are involved in the development and support of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and what this initiative means for people who use those services?

Councillor Brownridge replied that in November our colleagues in the NHS committed to make a step change in their work in order to better connect with the Administration's policy of integrated working at neighbourhood level. Over the last few years, the Council has been progressing work on public service reform. At the November Integrated Care Partnership Committee, it was agreed that all NHS providers and healthcare providers more widely will now also place integrated working at neighbourhood level at the heart of their strategies. Work will progress in the New Year to align the corresponding work programmes to this.

Question from Councillor Arnott which sought clarification on the community grants programme, available from the One Oldham Fund?

Councillor Brownridge replied that The One Oldham Fund is a strategic single investment fund that uses pooled resources from a range of sources VCFSE sector in Oldham. The fund is administered by Action Together. Since its launch in October 2021 the fund has distributed £1.6m to voluntary and community organisations in Oldham

These grants have been awarded across a range of outcome themes, including health and wellbeing, hate crime, children & young people, cost of living.

The majority of grant awards are to organisations working across the borough, or across more than one district. North district has fewer applications coming in than from other districts so Action Together and the Council's District team are working with groups in that district.

The One Oldham Fund is not affected by the recent news that GMCVO has gone into administration. GMCVO are not an investor in this fund.

Question from Councillor Hamblett seeking clarification on electric vehicle charging points across the Borough?  
Councillor Brownridge undertook to provide Councillor Hamblett with a written answer to his question.



h. Councillor Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham

The Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham presented his report.

Question from Councillor Nasheen – Would the Cabinet Member agree with me that people who fly tip for profit or because they are lazy should be ashamed of themselves & the amount of money they cost council taxpayers to clean up after them? How can people make sure the 'man with a van' who is taking their rubbish away has a licence and will dispose of it legally?  
Councillor Godwin replied that fly-tipping is a scourge that affects the whole of the borough and can cause significant public health issues.

Council teams investigate and clear thousands of tips each year as it blights Oldham's beautiful landscapes and the costing hundreds of thousands of pounds, we encourage all residents to ensure that any 'man with a van' service they use is registered with the Environment Agency and the details are checked on the Agency's website. If the material is fly tipped, the resident will be responsible and could be fined or prosecuted for it. Therefore, we encourage all to use reputable, honest and licensed waste carriers.

Question from Councillor Hamblett - could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the disabled car park behind the Tommyfield pub? When will the car park be operating at its original capacity so that blue badge holders can have proper access to parking without the current congestion.

Councillor Goodwin replied that Hackney carriage bays were relocated to the New Radcliffe Street car park when the rank was lost on Dan Fold due to the ongoing redevelopment works in the town centre. In order to increase capacity, new disabled bays were implemented on the carriageway off New Radcliffe Street, close to the Integrated Care Centre.

Work is ongoing to locate other suitable locations within the town centre to implement further blue badge bays. There are no immediate plans to make changes to New Radcliffe Street car park. However, a review of accessible parking forms part of the car parking strategy work and we will look to support additional capacity where possible.

In the meantime, if users of the car parks are having issues, we will investigate and take appropriate action. Problems can be reported at any time to the council's parking enforcement team.

Question from Councillor Lancaster - I recently attended an Elected Member Local Transport Plan session with Transport for Greater Manchester, at which I learnt of their Vision Zero for Safer Roads, which sets the noble ambition of zero fatalities and life changing injuries on our roads by 2040. In order to make meaningful progress against that ambition, enforcement of

excessive speeds will need to be improved – traffic calming measures alone will not suffice – and so many more permanent speed cameras must be erected and maintained. At present, however, the criteria for new speed cameras is prohibitive and nigh impossible to satisfy. Will the Cabinet Member commit to raising the example of Leicestershire, where speed cameras have been introduced at locations of known community concern, at the GM Casualty Reduction Partnership, and pursue any other opportunities to increase permanent speed camera coverage?

Councillor Goodwin replied thanking Councillor Lancaster for his question and for attending the Local Transport Plan session with Transport for Greater Manchester.

I share resident concerns about the road safety issues associated with speeding vehicles and I'm very keen, as I know every other councillor here is, to ensure that the roads in Oldham are safe for all users. Where issues are identified, we will continue work with our partners and residents to secure safety improvements.

Greater Manchester Safer Roads Partnership is, along with the 10 Greater Manchester boroughs, collaborating on the drafting of a new Safety Camera Handbook.

The new handbook includes revised criteria for assessing applications for Safety Cameras. The new criteria will give Highway Authorities much greater flexibility over the location of new safety camera sites and is due to "go live" in 2025. Once live, we will work closely with the Partnership, residents and Greater Manchester Police to bring forward sites that require improvements. We will share more details in due course.

Question from Councillor Marland - Leaf clearance on our pavements and footpaths this autumn/winter has been abysmal. Residents are reporting slips and falls and inaccessible pavements as a result of this Administration completely failing to get the basics right.

Could the Cabinet Member explain why leaf clearance across Oldham has been so below standard this year; and outline what steps will be taken to ensure improvements are made?

Councillor Goodwin replied that every year, the Street Cleansing teams start Autumn leaf clearance in September and much of this work depends on the weather, as milder weather leads to a prolonged period of leaf fall.

Leaf fall and debris blocking drains causes localised standing water / flooding when there is rain, therefore these areas have had to be prioritised to protect properties and ensure highway safety and prevent road closures.

Work remains ongoing by the team who remove over 1,300 tonnes of leaves from the borough's roads and footpaths every year.

In order to increase capacity and efficiency, we are looking to replace some of the sweeper vehicles but they will only arrive in the new year.

- i. Councillor Dean – Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture

The Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture presented his report.



Question from Councillor Aftab Hussain - What kind of activities are being provided for eligible children by the Household Support Fund over the Christmas period? And does the Cabinet Member know how many eligible children will be able to join in? Councillor Dean replied that the Household Support Fund was providing support to approximately 19,000 children and young people on means tested free school meals during the Christmas holidays in the form of a £40 voucher per child.

Household Support Fund is also supporting the expansion of the HAF programme to families above the free school meals threshold. This will provide a further 1600 places at Holiday activity provision enabling children and young people to access enriching and fun activities over the Christmas holiday period alongside a hot nutritional meal. The programme also includes specific activities targeted at children and young people living in temporary accommodation.

Question from Councillor Bishop - Graduates from Oldham Theatre Workshop were shown around the new location for the Workshop in November, in the Old Library building, which will also house the council chambers. What does this mean for the previous plans to use a single space to house and coordinate the many arts organisations that Oldham has together? And what does it mean for the "arts quarter" concept, given that the Coliseum is now due to return to Fairbottom Street?

Councillor Dean replied that as well as creating a fantastic space for Oldham Theatre Workshop we are also on track to open the new event space which will host much of the programme from the QE Hall as well as the theatre on Fairbottom Street next year.

Through the Cultural Partnership Board, of which I am the Chair, we work with a range of arts and cultural organisations across the borough and are actively working with them to understand their needs, mapping use of assets across the wider estate to give more cultural organisations opportunity to access the most suitable space for their needs.

The cultural programme is a key part of our town centre regeneration programme with the heritage, arts and cultural focus still very much within this part of the town centre.

Question from Councillor Charters - has the Council had any information about plans to introduce a new "right to buy" for community assets, outlined in the King's Speech in July, will make it easier for people to purchase empty heritage assets and convert them into cultural venues, with the government providing "seed funding" to help them to do it?

Councillor Dean replied that as you have outlined The UK government is advancing plans to introduce a "right to buy" for community assets as part of its legislative agenda, highlighted in the King's Speech.

This initiative aims to empower communities to purchase and revitalise valued but underused or empty heritage assets, such



as pubs, shops, and cultural venues, converting them into community-beneficial spaces like arts centres or music venues. The policy, expected to be part of the English Devolution Bill, reflects a commitment to community-driven regeneration and economic participation. It is expected to support these efforts, the government will provide "seed funding" to assist communities in acquiring and developing these assets.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Leader and Portfolio Holder reports be noted.
2. That the Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and the Minutes of the meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024, be noted.

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**NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS**

**Motion 1: Get Britain Working**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Ali SECONDED the following Motion:

This Council notes the publication of the Get Britain Working White Paper which signals a cross-Government approach to building an economy where everyone can have the opportunity of secure, rewarding and fulfilling work.

This Council further notes that Get Oldham Working has been providing support for employees, employers and those seeking employment since 2013 and has created almost 20,000 opportunities including filling 12,000 jobs, nearly 2,000 apprenticeships and 400 traineeships plus helping just under 1,800 residents into work experience placements.

This Council supports the approach laid out in the White Paper which will provide:

- support for people to get back into work if they are outside the workforce (and help to stay in employment if they have a health condition)
- access to training, an apprenticeship, or help to find work for young people (including help to avoid losing touch with the workforce at a young age)
- help for people to get a job, upskill, and get on in their career, whether they are unemployed or in employment, alongside clear obligations on people to take up support and do in return everything they can to work.
- support for employers to recruit, retain and develop staff.

This Council welcomes the joined-up proposals including investing in the NHS to get people treated more quickly, expansion of mental health support and setting up a Jobs and Careers Service (replacing JobCentre+) with the focus on supporting people back into work by providing a personalised service. Every 18-to-21-year-old in England will have access to an apprenticeship, quality training and education opportunities



or help to find a job under a new 'Youth Guarantee'. The Connect to Work scheme will provide voluntary employment offers to people with disabilities, health conditions or complex barriers to work.



This Council looks forward to the outcome of the Independent Review to better support employers to take on, and keep in work, people with disabilities.

This Council believes that the experience of Get Oldham Working and the Greater Manchester Live Well programme means Oldham is well placed to make the most of these opportunities, in particular the investment from the Greater Manchester trailblazer to mobilise local work, health and skills support.

This Council resolves to:

1. Organise a Get Britain Working summit as soon as practicable to brief partners on the White Paper and to work through the opportunities from the Labour Government's investment, including the trailblazer, to design a Get Britain Working Plan for Oldham.
2. Review the impact of Get Oldham Working and consider how Get Britain Working can enhance our local offer building on the good links with 800 local employers, integrated and personalised advice, guidance and skills support and mental health therapy already available.
3. Do everything possible to ensure Oldham residents benefit from the opportunities offered by Get Britain Working, including ensuring that our young people make the most of the 'Youth Guarantee'.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED

#### **RESOLVED:**

This Council resolves to:

1. Organise a Get Britain Working summit as soon as practicable to brief partners on the White Paper and to work through the opportunities from the Labour Government's investment, including the trailblazer, to design a Get Britain Working Plan for Oldham.
2. Review the impact of Get Oldham Working and consider how Get Britain Working can enhance our local offer building on the good links with 800 local employers, integrated and personalised advice, guidance and skills support and mental health therapy already available.
3. Do everything possible to ensure Oldham residents benefit from the opportunities offered by Get Britain Working, including ensuring that our young people make the most of the 'Youth Guarantee'.

#### **Motion 2: Bee Network**

Councillor Charters MOVED and Councillor Taylor SECONDED the following Motion:

In August 2022, Greater Manchester became the first major city outside of London to introduce a cap on bus fares, prices for adults were capped at £2 a journey or £5 a day, and £1 for journey or £2.50 a day for children under 16.



Oldham was chosen to host the launch of the Tranche 2 bus franchising area in March 2024 and four months later we hosted a visit from the new Secretary of State for Transport. On both occasions we were able to showcase our new space in the Spindles, the relocated, integrated TfGM Travelshop and the fully electrified bus depot at Mumps.

The upcoming network review in Oldham is a real opportunity to affect change on future bus services in Oldham. As an example, Bolton and Wigan have seen services reintroduced and new all-night services introduced to serve the night-time economy and large employment sites such as Bolton Hospital being served through the night.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester announced that due to the Bee Network model, which relies on low fare, high patronage system like in London, that Greater Manchester will continue with the £2 bus fare until the end of 2025, subject to a mid-year review to ensure that it is still financially viable.

This Council notes:

- The per-kilometre cost of Bee Network contracts are on average one third cheaper than previous tenders under the deregulated system
- Control of Greater Manchester's buses means that profits from rising patronage of buses will be re-invested into the service and for the benefit of residents rather than going into the pockets of shareholders.
- Control of the system means that we can help residents in other ways, such as offering an annual Bee Network bus pass through Oldham Credit Union, cutting the cost of bus travel by around £5 a week.
- That the Bee Network has been a success for Oldham's commuters, ensuring that they are able to get to work or school on time for less money than under the deregulated system.

This Council resolves to:

- 1 Continue to work alongside our Greater Manchester partners, including the GMCA, Transport for Greater Manchester and the other 9 GM authorities to ensure that decisions made around public transport are focused on improving the resident experience.
- 2 Engage pro-actively with the Network Review in early 2025, ensuring that all residents voices are heard in the process.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council continues to work alongside our Greater Manchester partners, including the GMCA, Transport for Greater Manchester and the other 9 GM authorities to ensure that decisions made around public transport are focused on improving the resident experience.
2. That the Council continues to engage pro-actively with the Network Review in early 2025, ensuring that all residents voices are heard in the process.

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## **NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS**

### **Motion 1 – Social Care Funding Crisis: National Insurance Contributions.**

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

Council notes that: From April next year employer's National Insurance contributions will increase by 1.2% and the threshold at which employers must contribute to National Insurance will be reduced to all employees earning £5,000 or more.

The Institute of General Practice Management has estimated that the rise will mean the average GP surgery's tax bill will go up by around £20,000 a year. The 6,275 GP practices in England could end up facing a total of £125.5M a year in additional costs. This and other key parts of our health services unlike hospital staff are not except from this increase.

This is the equivalent of providing 2.24 million GP appointments, at £56 per appointment. The average GP surgery could therefore lose the equivalent of 357 appointments a year.

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) has revealed that, by its calculations, local authorities would face £1.8B in extra costs in 2025-26 due to increases in employers' NICs and the national living wage (NLW) announced in the last Budget, along with inflation.

While principal councils will be exempt from the rise in employer NICs, the Government it has offered no such protection to care providers, which the Nuffield Trust has estimated will face £940m in extra costs from the measure in 2025–26.

Council further notes that:

This is likely to have a significant impact on the cost of the social care to Oldham Council, which is already this year facing a £20 million overspend predicted, with overspend on adult social care at £3.8m, and children's services at £6.6m. This increase in NICs will severely hamper the Council's attempts to cut its overspend and could wipe out any predicted improvements in its financial position as a result of changes to the formula for spending indicated.

Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government to demand that the NIC exemption is

changed to ensure that health services and social care – which makes up such a significant proportion of local government spending – are included, in line with their statement that “Reform and prevention are critical if we are to turn around the cycle of system failure and cost escalation.”

2. To write to local MPs Jim McMahon, Debbie Abrahams, and Lucy Powell asking for their support in a review of the impact of the increase, including:
  - the cost implications for funding health and social care in Oldham of the NIC increase;
  - the implications for Council Tax rises to meet the demand for social care funding;
  - the potential reduction in availability of GP services which are already stretched.

#### AMENDMENT

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

Council notes that:

From April next year employer’s National Insurance contributions will increase by 1.2% and the threshold at which employers must contribute to National Insurance will be reduced to all employees earning £5,000 or more.

The Institute of General Practice Management has estimated that the rise will mean the average GP surgery’s tax bill will go up by around £20,000 a year. The 6,275 GP practices in England could end up facing a total of £125.5M a year in additional costs. This and other key parts of our health services unlike hospital staff are not except from this increase.

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) has revealed that, by its calculations, local authorities would face £1.8B in extra costs in 2025-26 due to increases in employers’ NICs and the national living wage (NLW) announced in the last Budget, along with inflation.

While principal councils will be exempt from the rise in employer NICs, the Government it has offered no such protection to care providers, which the Nuffield Trust has estimated will face £940m in extra costs from the measure in 2025–26.

Council further notes that:

This could have a significant impact on the cost of the social care to Oldham Council, which is already this year facing a £20 million overspend predicted, with overspend on adult social care at £3.8m, and children’s services at £6.6m. This increase in NICs could hamper the Council’s attempts to cut its overspend and could potentially negate any predicted improvements in its financial position as a result of changes to the formula for spending indicated.

That as per the Care Act (2014) the Council has a duty, to ensure a diverse, sustainable and quality adult social care

market for Oldham residents meeting their assessed eligibility needs.



This Council will outline the projected and potential financial impact to Oldham's commissioned social care providers as part of the annual fee review, with the rates modelling process that takes place for annual budget setting and is due to be ratified at Budget Council on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

Council resolves to:

- a. Write to the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to urge them to consider the potential impact of NIC on the cost of commissioned social care services when confirming the Local Government Finance Settlement, as social care services make up such a significant proportion of local government spending and welcoming the government's recognition in the Local Government Finance Policy Statement that "Reform and prevention are critical if we are to turn around the cycle of system failure and cost escalation."
- b. To write to local MPs Jim McMahon, Debbie Abrahams, and Lucy Powell to inform them that Oldham Council is exploring:
  - the cost implications for funding health and social care in Oldham of the NIC increase.
  - the implications for budget setting to meet the demand for social care funding.
  - And seek their support to lobby government to minimise any potential adverse impacts from NIC rises.
- c. Ask the Deputy Chief Executive (Health & Care) and the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing to investigate the potential impact on existing and future GP services in the Borough.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

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

**RESOLVED:**

Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to urge them to consider the potential impact of NIC on the cost of commissioned social care services when confirming the Local Government Finance Settlement, as social care services make up such a significant proportion of local government spending and welcoming the government's recognition in the Local Government Finance Policy Statement that "Reform and prevention are critical if we are to turn around the cycle of system failure and cost escalation."

2. To write to local MPs Jim McMahon, Debbie Abrahams, and Lucy Powell to inform them that Oldham Council is exploring:
  - the cost implications for funding health and social care in Oldham of the NIC increase.
  - the implications for budget setting to meet the demand for social care funding.
  - And seek their support to lobby government to minimise any potential adverse impacts from NIC rises.
3. Ask the Deputy Chief Executive (Health & Care) and the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing to investigate the potential impact on existing and future GP services in the Borough.

**Motion 2 – Ethical Investment: Divestment from Fossil Fuels and Arms by the Greater Manchester Pension Fund**

Councillor Kouser MOVED and Councillor Azad SECONDED the following Motion:

**This Council notes - Oldham's Ethical and Climate Leadership:**

- In July 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.

**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.
- 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:**

- a. Investments in fossil fuels and arms perpetuate climate destruction, human suffering, and global instability, making them morally indefensible and financially risky.
- b. Divestment aligns with Oldham's commitments to human rights, climate action, and ethical governance, while mitigating financial risks.
- c. Arrest warrants against figures like Netanyahu emphasise the urgent need to act decisively against complicity in human rights abuses.

### **This Council resolves to:**

- **Demand Divestment:**  
Request the Leader of the Council to write to GMPF and the Mayor of Greater Manchester, urging GMPF to:
- Develop 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 from arms companies supplying weapons to regimes engaged in breaches of international law and human rights abuses.
- **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 international law.
- Progress towards divestment and outcomes of company engagements.
- **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.
- **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.

**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.

**AMENDMENT**

Councillor Mushtaq MOVED and Councillor Jabbar SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

This Council notes:

Oldham's Ethical and Climate Leadership:

- In 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.
- 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:

- 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.

#### 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.

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#### 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 emphasise the urgent need to act decisively against complicity in human rights abuses.

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#### This Council resolves to:

1. Step up divestment:  
Request the Leader of the Council to write to GMPF and the Mayor of Greater Manchester, urging GMPF to:
  - within 12 months develop a clear plan to divest from fossil fuels and arms.
  - 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.
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 as defined in international law.
  - Progress towards divestment.
3. Empower Representation:  
Mandate Oldham's representative on GMPF to advocate for

divestment from fossil fuels and arms 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.

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 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.

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

COUNCILLOR		COUNCILLOR	
Adams Christine	APOLOGIES	Hussain Junaid	FOR
Akhtar Shoab	FOR	Hussain Sajed	FOR
Al-Hamdani Sam	FOR	Ibrahim Nyla	FOR
Ali Mohon	FOR	Iqbal Nadeem	FOR
Ali Zaheer	FOR	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	FOR
Arnott Dave	AGAINST	Jabbar Abdul	FOR
Aslam Naseem	FOR	Kenyon Mark	FOR
Azad Montaz Ali	FOR	Kouser Aisha	FOR

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

On a recorded VOTE being taken 52 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with 5 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 0 ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore CARRIED.

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

### **RESOLVED:**

This Council resolves to:

1. Step up divestment: Request that the Leader of the Council write to GMPF and the Mayor of Greater Manchester, urging GMPF to:

- within 12 months develop a clear plan to divest from fossil fuels and arms.
- 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.
- 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 as defined in international law.
  - Progress towards divestment.
- 3. Empower Representation:
  - Mandate Oldham's representative on GMPF to advocate for divestment from fossil fuels and arms 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

### **Motion 3 – The Old Failsworth Library**

Councillor Ball MOVED and Councillor Wilkinson SECONDED the following Motion:

The Old Failsworth Library, on Main Street, Failsworth which was bequeathed to the people of Failsworth by the Sidlow Family has fallen into a great state of disrepair. A Nursery that currently rents part of the building is a popular and well used facility in Failsworth and wants to stay in the current building, as it is an ideal and well-known location.

The Council has not fully utilised The Old Failsworth Library and it is only half used. It is a large and spacious building which could have partially replaced the old Community Centre and allowed local groups to use the space.

The state of repair to the building is less than satisfactory. There have been reports of leaks, damp, mould and other issues which should have been addressed before they became too expensive to repair. It is shocking that a public building has been left to rot.

The evidence of damp and mould is clear to see. The current tenant has been proactive in trying to maintain the building, while doing so they have continued to ask for repairs to be completed.

Some Failsworth Councillors have contributed by trying to help, and the money donated helped the nursery to source much needed furniture, as they had been spending nursery funds allocated for the furniture on trying to spruce up the interior of the building.



Councillors and the tenant have written to the former Member of Parliament and Deputy Prime Minister Angela Raynor MP, Jim McMahon MP and Lucy Powell MP to see what help they can provide.

Inside the nursery we have seen where parts of a ceiling had come down, where the window area had rotted away and with gaps large enough for children to put fingers into the gap. There was a room so cold and damp that OMBC had to fit a very small electric wall heater high up near the ceiling which was inadequate.

We know of a number of buildings which are publicly owned, or considered public assets, which have sadly fallen into a state of disrepair. It is disappointing that buildings outside of Oldham Town Centre, such as the Old Failsworth Library are being put at risk and could end up costing the Council more in the long run due to inaction rather than taking proactive steps to protect our public assets.

The Council therefore resolves to:

1. Inform and work with all Failsworth Councillors to ensure that the current tenant of the building is kept up to date with all information regarding the lease and the repairs needed to the building.
2. That Council officers will keep all Failsworth Councillors up to date with quarterly reports on the repairs needed to the building and other issues that may arise.
3. That the Old Failsworth Library is renovated and brought up to a workable standard so that it can be used by other local community groups and or businesses.
4. That the underuse of the building for the past decade has meant the Council has lost revenue and the people of Failsworth have lost out on a community facility.
5. That a plan is put in place involving all Failsworth Councillors to save this building for future community use.

#### AMENDMENT

Councillor Hindle MOVED and Councillor Hobin SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

The former Failsworth Library, on Main Street, Failsworth which was bequeathed to the people of Failsworth by Sidlow Family has fallen into a great state of disrepair. A Nursery that currently rents part of the building is a popular and well used facility in Failsworth and wants to stay in the current building as it is an ideal and well-known location.

The Council has not fully utilised the former Failsworth Library because of the renovation of the Town Hall', and the former

Failsworth Library is only half used. It is a large and spacious building which could have partially replaced the old Community Centre and allowed local groups to use the space.



The state of repair to the building is less than satisfactory. There have been reports of leaks, damp, mould and other issues which should have been addressed before they became too expensive to repair. It is shocking that a public building has been left to rot.

The evidence of damp and mould is clear to see. The current tenant has been proactive in trying to maintain the building, while doing so they have continued to ask for repairs to be completed.

Some Failsworth Councillors have contributed in trying to help, and the money donated helped the nursery to source much needed furniture as they had been spending nursery funds allocated for the furniture on trying to spruce up the interior of the building.

Councillors and the tenant have written to the former Member of Parliament and Deputy Prime Minister Angela Raynor MP, Jim McMahon MP and Lucy Powell MP to see what help they can provide.

Inside the nursery we have seen where parts of a ceiling had come down, where the window area had rotted away and with gaps large enough for children to put fingers into the gap. There was a room so cold and damp that OMBC had to fit a very small electric wall heater high up near the ceiling which was inadequate.

We know of a number of buildings which are publicly owned, or considered public assets, which have sadly fallen into a state of disrepair.

This Council notes:

- The renovation of Failsworth Town Hall and the extension to include the library mean that the former library was no longer used as a community asset but was leased to a nursery and recently used as storage while Royton Town Hall and Library underwent renovations.

The Council therefore resolves to:

1. Continue to keep the current tenant of the former library on Main Street up to date with information regarding the lease and potential repairs to the building.
2. That Council officers will keep all Failsworth Councillors up to date potential renovations and future uses of the former Failsworth library building.
3. Explore opportunities to renovate the former Failsworth Library on Main Street so that it can be used by other local community groups and or businesses subject to funding.

4. That all Failsworth Councillors are given opportunities to be involved in plans to potentially renovate this building for future community use.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

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

**RESOLVED:**

Council resolves to:

1. Continue to keep the current tenant of the former library on Main Street up to date with information regarding the lease and potential repairs to the building.
2. That Council officers will keep all Failsworth Councillors up to date potential renovations and future uses of the former Failsworth library building.
3. Explore opportunities to renovate the former Failsworth Library on Main Street so that it can be used by other local community groups and or businesses subject to funding.
4. That all Failsworth Councillors are given opportunities to be involved in plans to potentially renovate this building for future community use.

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**TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR REVIEW  
REPORT 2024/25**

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Director of Finance that advised Council of the performance of the Treasury Management function for the first half of 2024/25 and provides a comparison of performance against the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators.

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

- An economic update for the first half of 2024/25 (External Context).
- Net Borrowing and Investments (Local Context).
- A review and updates of the Council's current treasury management position.
- Council Borrowing.
- Treasury Investment Activity.
- Treasury Performance for the first half of the year.
- Compliance.
- Treasury Management Prudential Indicators.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council:

1. Approves the Treasury Management Half Year Review report.
2. Approves the proposed revisions to the Maturity Structure of Borrowing, outlined in section 2.10.5, of the submitted report.
3. Approves the proposed revision to the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts outlined in section 2.8 and Appendix 2 of the submitted report.
4. Approves the proposed revision to the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy outlined in section 2.7 and Appendix 4, of the submitted report.

13

**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 6<sup>th</sup> November 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 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024, be noted and confirmed.

14

**CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2025/26**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Jabbar SECONDED a report of the Interim Borough Solicitor which sought approval of the draft Calendar of Meetings for the 2025/2026 Municipal Year.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The Council's Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
2. Approval of any outstanding dates be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders.

15

**GAMBLING POLICY**

Councillor Taylor MOVED and Councillor Goodwin SECONDED a report of the Director of Environment which updated members of the Council following a review of the Council's Gambling Policy and to seek approval of the update policy.

**RESOLVED that:**

Council approves the Council's Gambling Policy, as detailed in the Appendix to the Director of Environment's report, with an implementation date of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025, for a three-year period.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 9.35pm