

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, Chowhan, Cosgrove, Davis, Dean, Ghafoor, Goodwin, Hamblett, Harkness, Harrison, Hince, Hindle, Hobin, Hughes, Hurley, A Hussain, F Hussain, J. Hussain, S. Hussain, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Islam, Jabbar, Kenyon, Kouser, Lancaster, Marland, McLaren, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Nasheen, Navesey, Quigg, Rustidge, Shah, Sharp, Sheldon, Shuttleworth, Sykes, Taylor, Wahid, Wilkinson, Williamson and Woodvine

1 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Malik.

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

There were no declarations of interests.

3 **REQUEST FOR A NATIONAL PUBLIC INQUIRY THAT
INVESTIGATES THE SCOURGE OF CHILD SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION'**

Councillor Quigg MOVED and Councillor Arnott SECONDED the following MOTION:

We humbly request that this Council call upon His Majesty's Government to initiate a national public inquiry that investigates the scourge of child sexual exploitation by rape gangs both historic and current in the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham but also across the whole of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

We request that a full national public inquiry is held urgently, as villages, towns and cities up and down the spine of the country have been affected by child sexual exploitation which was carried out by evil rape gangs on an unprecedented scale.

This Council notes that:

1. The employment by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council of the ringleader of the Rochdale rape gang which was stated in the 2022 Assurance review quote: "Offender A worked for Oldham Council between 1988 and 2006. He was employed as a welfare rights officer in the welfare rights unit of the council seconded to the Oldham Pakistani Community Centre. In May 2012 he was found guilty of two rapes, aiding and abetting rape, sexual assault and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, and sentenced to 19 years' imprisonment. In June 2012 he was found guilty of a further 30 rape charges and was jailed for an additional 22 years.

Offender A lived in Oldham and was a member of the Oldham Labour Party. We believe there were serious failings in how both the council and Greater Manchester Police investigated concerns in respect of Offender A.”

2. That this Council voted down multiple requests from 2020 to 2024 for inquiries of different kinds until it agreed to hold a non-statutory local inquiry in July 2024 following the Council falling into no overall control.
3. That no Council officers who worked or currently work at Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council have been disciplined or lost their job for professional failures in protecting children from rape gangs and child sexual exploitation to date.
4. That at the reconvened Council meeting on the 20th January 2025 that the Chairman of the Council meeting sanctioned a Conservative Councillor and asked her to withdraw her remarks for using the term “Pakistani heritage rape gangs” when asking if the Council Leader would support a national inquiry.
5. Notes the comments made by the Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon, Yvette Cooper MP, which is noted in Hansard quote; “Ten years ago, two reports by Alexis Jay and Louise Casey in Rotherham found that 1,400 children had been sexually exploited, raped by multiple perpetrators, trafficked across other towns, abducted, beaten and threatened with guns. Children had even been doused in petrol. Girls as young as 11 had been raped. Those reports a decade ago identified a failure to confront Pakistani heritage gangs and a “widespread perception” that they should “downplay’ the ethnic dimensions” for fear of being seen to be racist. When those reports came out, those failings in Rotherham were condemned across the board by both Government and Opposition in this House. As I said at the time: “It is never an excuse to use race and ethnicity or community relations as an excuse not to investigate and punish sex offenders.”— [Official Report, 2 September 2014; Vol. 585, c. 169.]”
6. Notes the comments made by the Shadow Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon, Chris Philp MP, which is noted in Hansard quote; “The whole country is shocked by the rape gang scandal. Over years or decades, thousands or maybe tens of thousands of vulnerable young girls were systematically raped by organised gangs of men, predominantly of Pakistani heritage. Instead of those victims being protected and the perpetrators prosecuted, those girls were systematically failed. Many cases were covered up because of absurd concerns about so-called community relations. Often, the police did not investigate. Local councils covered things up. The Crown Prosecution Service frequently failed victims. Those raising concerns were frequently accused of racism. Never again can people be silenced in that way. I pay tribute to people who have raised these cases over the years, starting with former Labour MP Ann Cryer, who first raised these problems nearly two decades ago and bravely persevered despite accusations of racism and worse,

including from her own colleagues. In that vein, let me say a word on the Prime Minister's comments this morning: it is not far right to stand up for victims of mass rape."

7. That for too long governments of all colours have rejected this much needed national inquiry. It is time to hear from the survivors and victims who have been affected, and to expose those organisations, individuals and institutions that either covered it up, colluded in this scandal or stood by and did nothing.

This Council resolves to:

Write to the Home Office to demand that His Majesty's Government initiate without any further delay a national public inquiry into the scourge of child sexual exploitation by rape gangs both historic and current in Oldham, Greater Manchester and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

AMENDMENT 1:

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

Survivors of sexual violence must at all times be given the opportunity to lead the process of seeking both support and justice over the traumatic abuse that they have undergone, and to determine what support they need to achieve those goals.

Two survivors' statement was read out at the last Council meeting. These are their words, not ours. The first stated the following:

"Whilst we hoped for and would have liked a national inquiry, we appreciate they have come up with a compromise. 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."

The second stated the following:

"We are still not happy with the overall decision, but we are happy to continue with a local inquiry ... we hope the Council remain transparent and politics are kept aside."

The Council, and all commentators, must listen to and amplify the voices of young women, particularly young, working-class women, those who have lived in care, and those who have survived abuse and violence.

This Council notes that:

It is important that the language that is used when discussing the issue of abuse and sexual violence is clear and does not hide the violence that has taken place, while it must not

retraumatise the survivors by using terms of extreme violence casually.



Following requests from survivors, this amendment has specifically removed some of the extremely explicit descriptions of sexual violence, as when survivors hear this in a public forum it plays a role in re-traumatising them. We humbly request that this Council call upon His Majesty's Government to ensure a statutory public inquiry that investigates the scourge of both historic and current child sexual exploitation in the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham.

Any national investigations into the whole of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland must not relegate an examination of Oldham into a paragraph in another report.

We request that a full statutory public inquiry is held urgently, as villages, towns and cities up and down the spine of the country have been affected by child sexual exploitation and abuse which was carried out by evil criminal gangs on an unprecedented scale, and the even more widespread levels of sexual and sexually motivated violence that are endemic in British society, across people of all colours and creeds.

This Council further notes:

1. The employment by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council of the ringleader of the gang that sexually abused so many girls in Rochdale which was stated in the 2022 Assurance review quote: "Offender A worked for Oldham Council between 1988 and 2006. He was employed as a welfare rights officer in the welfare rights unit of the council seconded to the Oldham Pakistani Community Centre. In May 2012 he was found guilty of two rapes, aiding and abetting rape, sexual assault and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, and sentenced to 19 years' imprisonment. In June 2012 he was found guilty of a further 30 rape charges and was jailed for an additional 22 years. Offender A lived in Oldham and was a member of the Oldham Labour Party. We believe there were serious failings in how both the council and Greater Manchester Police investigated concerns in respect of Offender A."
2. That this Council voted down multiple requests from 2020 to 2024 for inquiries of different kinds until it was agreed to hold a non-statutory local inquiry in July 2024 following the Council falling into no overall control.
3. That no Council officers who worked or currently work at Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council have been disciplined or lost their job for professional failures in protecting children from rape gangs and child sexual exploitation to date.
4. Notes the comments made by the Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon, Yvette Cooper MP, which is noted in Hansard quote; "Ten years ago, two reports by Alexis Jay and Louise Casey in Rotherham found that 1,400 children had been sexually exploited, raped by multiple perpetrators,

trafficked across other towns, ... Those reports a decade ago identified a failure to confront Pakistani heritage gangs and a “widespread perception” that they should “downplay’ the ethnic dimensions” for fear of being seen to be racist. When those reports came out, those failings in Rotherham were condemned across the board by both Government and Opposition in this House. As I said at the time: “It is never an excuse to use race and ethnicity or community relations as an excuse not to investigate and punish sex offenders.”— [Official Report, 2 September 2014; Vol. 585, c. 169.]”

5. Notes the comments made by the Shadow Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon, Chris Philp MP, which is noted in Hansard quote; “Instead of those victims being protected and the perpetrators prosecuted, those girls were systematically failed. Many cases were covered up because of absurd concerns about so called community relations. Often, the police did not investigate. Local councils covered things up. The Crown Prosecution Service frequently failed victims.
6. That no individual or political group should ever seek to exploit the tragedies of sexual violence that have been committed, everyone must at all times ensure that they listen to what survivors want, to ensure their voices are at the heart of all proposals, and to ensure that they are heard, supported and empowered.
7. That for too long governments of all colours have rejected this much needed statutory inquiry. It is time to hear from the survivors and victims who have been affected, and to expose those organisations, individuals and institutions that either covered it up, colluded in this scandal or stood by and did nothing.

This Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Home Office to demand that His Majesty’s Government ensure without any further delay a statutory public inquiry into the scourge of child sexual exploitation both historic and current by gangs and individuals in Oldham. A specific inquiry into Oldham is required so that an examination of Oldham does not relegate it into another paragraph in another report.
2. Support further national inquiries into the endemic levels of sexual violence against women and girls – and also against men – both in Greater Manchester and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to explore all the factors which contribute to this level of violence. This must never avoid confronting harsh truths, about who has committed violence, or about who has failed to deal with sexual violence, in a country which has failed to do this for too long.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT 1, which was CARRIED.

AMENDMENT 2:

Councillor Hobin addressed Council and announced that he was WITHDRAWING his AMENDMENT to the MOTION that was to be seconded by Councillor Hince.



AMENDMENT 3:

Councillor Wahid MOVED and Councillor Ghafoor SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

This Council notes that:

- a. The employment by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council of the ringleader of the Rochdale rape gang which was stated in the 2022 Assurance review quote: "Offender A worked for Oldham Council between 1988 and 2006. He was employed as a welfare rights officer in the welfare rights unit of the council seconded to the Oldham Pakistani Community Centre. In May 2012 he was found guilty of two rapes, aiding and abetting rape, sexual assault and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, and sentenced to 19 years' imprisonment. In June 2012 he was found guilty of a further 30 rape charges and was jailed for an additional 22 years. Offender A lived in Oldham and was a member of the Oldham Labour Party. We believe there were serious failings in how both the council and Greater Manchester Police investigated concerns in respect of Offender A."
- b. That this Council voted down multiple requests from 2020 to 2024 for inquiries of different kinds until it agreed to hold a non-statutory local inquiry in July 2024 following the Council falling into no overall control.
- c. That no Council officers who worked or currently work at Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council have been disciplined or lost their job for professional failures in protecting children from rape gangs and child sexual exploitation to date.
- d. That at the reconvened Council meeting on 20th January 2025 that the Chairman of the Council meeting sanctioned a Conservative Councillor and asked her to withdraw her remarks for using the term "Pakistani heritage rape gangs" when asking if the Council Leader would support a national inquiry.
- e. Notes the comments made by the Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon, Yvette Cooper MP, which is noted in Hansard quote; "Ten years ago, two reports by Alexis Jay and Louise Casey in Rotherham found that 1,400 children had been sexually exploited, raped by multiple perpetrators, trafficked across other towns, abducted, beaten and threatened with guns. Children had even been doused in petrol. Girls as young as 11 had been raped. Those reports a decade ago identified a failure to confront Pakistani heritage gangs and a "widespread perception" that they should "downplay" the ethnic dimensions" for fear of being seen to be racist. When those reports came out, those failings in Rotherham were condemned across the board by both Government and Opposition in this House. As I said at the time: "It is never an excuse to use

race and ethnicity or community relations as an excuse not to investigate and punish sex offenders.”— [Official Report, 2 September 2014; Vol. 585, c. 169.]”.

- f. Notes the comments made by the Shadow Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon, Chris Philp MP, which is noted in Hansard quote; “The whole country is shocked by the rape gang scandal. Over years or decades, thousands or maybe tens of thousands of vulnerable young girls were systematically raped by organised gangs of men, predominantly of Pakistani heritage. Instead of those victims being protected and the perpetrators prosecuted, those girls were systematically failed. Many cases were covered up because of absurd concerns about so-called community relations. Often, the police did not investigate. Local councils covered things up. The Crown Prosecution Service frequently failed victims. Those raising concerns were frequently accused of racism. Never again can people be silenced in that way. I pay tribute to people who have raised these cases over the years, starting with former Labour MP Ann Cryer, who first raised these problems nearly two decades ago and bravely persevered despite accusations of racism and worse, including from her own colleagues. In that vein, let me say a word on the Prime Minister’s comments this morning: it is not far right to stand up for victims of mass rape.”.
- g. That for too long governments of all colours have rejected this much needed national inquiry. It is time to hear from the survivors and victims who have been affected, and to expose those organisations, individuals and institutions that either covered it up, colluded in this scandal or stood by and did nothing.
- h. That following repeated calls for a local inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Oldham, the Council voted in July 2024 to establish a non-statutory local inquiry. This decision came after years of resistance, despite multiple reports highlighting institutional failures. However, concerns remain that without statutory powers, this inquiry will lack the ability to compel key witnesses, access crucial documents, or hold individuals and organisations fully accountable.
- i. That survivors, campaigners, and members of this Council have consistently argued that only a statutory inquiry can deliver full transparency and justice. A statutory inquiry would ensure that all survivors and individuals who have given testimony are legally compelled to provide evidence, while also creating a safe and supportive process for new witnesses and survivors to come forward.
- j. That the credibility and effectiveness of the local inquiry depend on an independent panel determining the terms of reference, ensuring that the investigation is free from political influence and fully focused on uncovering the truth.

This Council RESOLVES to:

1. Write to the Home Office to demand that His Majesty's Government initiate without any further delay a national public inquiry into the scourge of child sexual exploitation by rape gangs both historic and current in Oldham, Greater Manchester and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
2. Write to the Home Office to request that His Majesty's Government grants statutory powers to the local inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Oldham. This would ensure the inquiry has the authority to compel witnesses, demand full disclosure of evidence, and hold those responsible to account.
3. Request that an independent panel is appointed to set the terms of reference for the inquiry, ensuring that it is survivor-led, transparent, and robust.
4. Seek confirmation from the inquiry leadership on the actions that will be taken to ensure that all survivors and individuals who have previously given testimony are compelled to provide evidence, while also establishing a process to invite new witnesses and survivors to come forward.
5. Engage with survivor support organisations, legal experts, and national agencies to guarantee that all testimony is collected safely, ethically, and with appropriate safeguarding in place.
6. Call upon the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Mayor of Greater Manchester to publicly support granting statutory powers to the local inquiry, reinforcing the need for full transparency and accountability.

Council debated Amendment 3 and there had developed that there were elements of this Amendment that Council was prepared to support, notwithstanding that Amendment 1 had previously been approved as the substantive Motion. Therefore, the Mayor requested and it was **RESOLVED** that Council Procedure Rule 14 (Rules of Debate) be suspended to enable further discussion thereon and to allow for parts of Amendment 3 to be incorporated into the substantive Motion. Therefore, Councillor Al-Hamdani MOVED and Councillor Wahid SECONDED the following composite AMENDMENT (that was effectively a hybrid of AMENDMENT 1 and AMENDMENT 3):

Survivors of sexual violence must at all times be given the opportunity to lead the process of seeking both support and justice over the traumatic abuse that they have undergone, and to determine what support they need to achieve those goals.

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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.”



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of the Oldham Labour Party. We believe there were serious failings in how both the council and Greater Manchester Police investigated concerns in respect of Offender A.”

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- f. That no individual or political group should ever seek to exploit the tragedies of sexual violence that have been committed, everyone must at all times ensure that they listen to what survivors want, to ensure their voices are at the heart of all proposals, and to ensure that they are heard, supported and empowered.
- g. That for too long governments of all colours have rejected this much needed statutory inquiry. It is time to hear from the survivors and victims who have been affected, and to expose those organisations, individuals and institutions that either covered it up, colluded in this scandal or stood by and did nothing.
- h. That following repeated calls for a local inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Oldham, the Council voted in July 2024 to establish a non-statutory local inquiry. This decision came after years of resistance, despite multiple reports highlighting institutional failures. However, concerns remain that without statutory powers, this

inquiry will lack the ability to compel key witnesses, access crucial documents, or hold individuals and organisations fully accountable.

- i. That survivors, campaigners, and members of this Council have consistently argued that only a statutory inquiry can deliver full transparency and justice. A statutory inquiry would ensure that all survivors and individuals who have given testimony are legally compelled to provide evidence, while also creating a safe and supportive process for new witnesses and survivors to come forward.
- j. That the credibility and effectiveness of the local inquiry depend on an independent panel determining the terms of reference, ensuring that the investigation is free from political influence and fully focused on uncovering the truth.

This Council RESOLVES to:

- 1. Write to the Home Office to demand that His Majesty's Government initiate without any further delay a national public inquiry into the scourge of child sexual exploitation by rape gangs both historic and current in Oldham, Greater Manchester and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- 2. Write to the Home Office to request that His Majesty's Government grants statutory powers to the local inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Oldham. This would ensure the inquiry has the authority to compel witnesses, demand full disclosure of evidence, and hold those responsible to account.
- 3. Request that an independent panel is appointed to set the terms of reference for the inquiry, ensuring that it is survivor-led, transparent, and robust.
- 4. Seek confirmation from the inquiry leadership on the actions that will be taken to ensure that all survivors and individuals who have previously given testimony are compelled to provide evidence, while also establishing a process to invite new witnesses and survivors to come forward.
- 5. Engage with survivor support organisations, legal experts, and national agencies to guarantee that all testimony is collected safely, ethically, and with appropriate safeguarding in place.
- 6. Call upon the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Mayor of Greater Manchester to publicly support granting statutory powers to the local inquiry, reinforcing the need for full transparency and accountability.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.45pm

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