

Questions to Cabinet Members - Full Council – 20th January 2025 (was 18th December 2024)

From / Date	To	Question	Response
Cllr Luke Lancaster Sunday 8 th December 1:36pm	Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for Education & Skills	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?	Oldham Council encourages 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.
Cllr Luke Lancaster Sunday 8 th December 1:36pm	Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham	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	Thank you for your question Cllr Lancaster 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

		<p>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?</p>	<p>will continue work with our partners and residents to secure safety improvements.</p> <p>Greater Manchester Safer Roads Partnership is, along with the 10 Greater Manchester boroughs, collaborating on the drafting of a new Safety Camera Handbook.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Cllr Graham Shuttleworth</p> <p>Thursday 12th December 12:52pm</p>	<p>Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham</p>	<p>Following the change in October as to which items can now be placed in the brown recycling waste bin, has there been any significant increase in items sent for recycling and a reduction to that which goes to landfill?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question Councillor Shuttleworth. The Council recognises the need to improve recycling and help local communities to recycle more by recycling the right objects in the right bins. The recent changes mean that residents can now recycle plastic pots, tubs and trays – previously, these had to be returned to the store for recycling, and this meant that they were being added to the general waste collections, or they were being thrown in the recycle bin which was contaminating the load.</p> <p>The new changes mean that less waste is being landfilled or incinerated and it is much easier for residents to know which items can go in which bin.</p> <p>Many of the additional items being recycled are lightweight items, and given the existing volume that re recycle, the overall tonnage of recycling hasn't increased significantly.</p>

			<p>We will continue to work with partners across the region to support greater recycling and will response to changes in policy and practices to support our residents.</p>
<p>Cllr Holly Harrison</p> <p>Friday 13th December</p> <p>3:30pm</p>	<p>Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Decent Homes</p>	<p>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?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question Councillor Harrison</p> <p>One of the Council’s priorities is 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>

			<p>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.</p>
<p>Cllr Nadeem Iqbal</p> <p>Friday 13th December</p> <p>3:30pm</p>	<p>Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for Education & Skills</p>	<p>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?</p>	<p>The waiting list for children and young people to access the Speech and Language Therapy service has reduced from around 1800 at summer 2023 to below 750 currently.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Cllr Saj Hussain</p> <p>Friday 13th December</p>	<p>Cllr Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member for</p>	<p>Could Cllr Hussain 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?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Located on the upper floor of the Spindles, the Hive is a place where businesses can access practical information, advice</p>

3:30pm	Enterprise		<p>and guidance. It is a place for businesses to network, collaborate, share ideas and do business with each other.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Cllr Umar Nasheen Friday 13 th December 3:30pm	Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham	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 tax payers 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?	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Fly tipping is a scourge that effects the whole of the borough and can cause significant public health issues.</p> <p>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</p>

			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.
Cllr Josh Charters Friday 13 th December 3:30pm	Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities & Culture	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 do it?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Charters.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The policy, expected to be part of the English Devolution Bill, reflects a commitment to community-driven regeneration and economic participation</p> <p>It is expected to support these efforts, the government will provide "seed funding" to assist communities in acquiring and developing these assets.</p>
Cllr Aftab Hussain Friday 13 th December 3:30pm	Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Thriving Communi	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?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Hussain.</p> <p>Household Support Fund is 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.</p>

	ties & Culture		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
Cllr Ken Rustidge Friday 13 th December 3:50pm	Cllr Arooj Shah – Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham	What will be the impact of the Council achieving the Armed Forces Gold Accreditation? What difference will this make in services provided to Oldham’s veterans?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Rustidge.</p> <p>Currently Oldham Council provides a strong level of support to veterans and the wider armed forces community, this includes guaranteed interviews for veterans who meet the essential job criteria, paid time off for Reservists to attend their annual training, and discount secured at OCL.</p> <p>Thanks to the efforts we’ve made previously we currently hold a Silver Award from the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme. Over the coming months and years we are looking to do even more to support our armed forces community, including updating our Armed Forces Covenant pledges, supporting cadets units in the borough, and building a staff advocacy network.</p> <p>Veterans in our workforce will be made to feel more supported through these activities, and if we achieve the gold accreditation this year we will be able show our dedication to the Armed Forces Community.</p>

<p>Cllr Naseem Aslam</p> <p>Friday 13th December 7:15pm</p>	<p>Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People</p>	<p>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?</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Cllr Marie Bashforth</p> <p>Friday 13th December 7:15pm</p>	<p>Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing</p>	<p>Can Cllr 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?</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Cllr Junaid Hussain</p> <p>Monday 16th December 17:30</p>	<p>Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Decent Homes</p>	<p>Can Cllr Taylor update us on the work to add an extra MOT bay at Moorhey Street depot?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Hussain.</p> <p>Oldham Council’s Licensing Authority changed its policy last year in order to increase local control over the taxi trade by supporting more applications. The changes have resulted in a significant increase in the number of applicants, both as licensed drivers and registered private hire vehicles.</p> <p>This increase has resulted in greater demand for compliance and MOT capacity. To support this, the Council has invested in a 3rd MOT testing bay at the Moorhey St depot.</p>

			We will also be undertaking additional recruitment to increase the testing capacity by employing another MOT tester.
Cllr Abdul Malik Monday 16 th December 18:45	Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	Cllr 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?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Malik. This is a tragic national case, and we welcome the government strengthening multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and having oversight of elective home education.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Strategic Director of Children’s Services chairs fortnightly meetings to maintain progress on the delivery of actions.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Bi-annual progress reports are scrutinised by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board.</p>
Cllr Nazrul Islam Monday 16 th December 18:45	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Value for Money &	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?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Islam.</p> <p>I’m 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.</p> <p>Building on our comprehensive Library offer, we are using the funding to embed a partnership approach across the borough</p>

	Sustainability		<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Cllr Helen Bishop</p> <p>Tuesday 17th December 1:18pm</p>	<p>Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities & Culture</p>	<p>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?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Bishop.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Through the Cultural Partnership Board, of which I am the Chair, we work with a range of arts and cultural organisations</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

<p>Cllr Alicia Marland</p> <p>Tuesday 17th December 1:18pm</p>	<p>Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities & Culture</p>	<p>I would like to ask the Cabinet Member to confirm that a contribution of £24k to the Whit Friday central funds has been made? If so, please can the Cabinet Member confirm that there will no longer be an allowance taken from all Saddleworth Councillors from their annual budget?</p> <p>Will this funding become a regular annual payment so that councillor’s ward budgets will no longer be used as a standard practice?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Martland</p> <p>The Leader of the Council has confirmed her support for the important Whit Friday event in Saddleworth for the last fews years, and confirmation has been provided to the Event Committee that the Leader will be providing financial support from the Council for next years’ event.</p> <p>If the Committee write to the the Leader again for funding support for future events, then this will be reviewed and considered at that time.</p> <p>With regards to members budget allocations and contributions that they make towards this event, this is not something that the administration would oversee.</p>
<p>Cllr Alicia Marland</p> <p>Tuesday 17th December 1:18pm</p>	<p>Cllr Arooj Shah – Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham</p>	<p>How often we do feel proud about the achievements of Oldham and having a place in British history? Well I had the pleasure of watching a film this week that highlighted Oldham in a positive way when the first IVF baby was created by Dr Steptoe and Jean Purdy at Kershaws Hospital. The film is called Joy and it made me proud to know that a local hospital and many women of Oldham and Greater Manchester helped create a momentous moment in our history.</p> <p>This Council has another opportunity for Oldham to retain a part of this town’s history (albeit the complete opposite to human fertilisation). And that is ensuring that the nuclear bunker underneath this</p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Marland</p> <p>I must say however that I do take real issue with the comparison between the groundbreaking science that took place here in Oldham and the hope that IVF has provided for millions of families worldwide and a substandard bunker in the civic complex. I find the connection here incredibly bizarre.</p> <p>At this stage there are no confirmed plans for the future of the ‘bunker’ space. As we have previously indicated, we are continuing to work with our strategic partners, MUSE on the future use of the Civic Building. Those plans will take time to finalise and I am happy to share further updates in the future at the appropriate time.</p>

		building is preserved as a asset for future generations to enjoy as an educational facility. So several months have passed since I last asked this Council what was planned for this bunker so I would welcome a credible update from the Cabinet member on whether it will or will not be retained.	
Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani Tuesday 17 th December 1:18pm	Cllr Arooj Shah – Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham	In September, the chief executive of Oldham Council wrote to the Home Secretary to request an independent investigation into historic instances of child sex exploitation. Why was the response not provided to the full council as communications, but instead provided to an individual councillor, who apparently is not a member of the administration, who then provided a summary to the Council?	Thank you for your question, Cllr. The letter was received after the publication of the agenda for council, which went out on 29 October. It was too late for the it to be included in the actions report – this is why it’s included in the appendices for this meeting. Members will also remember that when I announced my cabinet and other political appointments at annual council I shared that I’d asked Cllr Hobin and Cllr Hince to lead on the CSE review, and it was shared with both of them for that reason.
Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani Tuesday 17 th December 1:18pm	Cllr Arooj Shah – Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham	I note that the Head of Rail at Transport for Greater Manchester wrote to MPs on 22 November, with regards to bringing rail into the Bee Network. In the appendix to the letter, he included in the locations affected, Mossley Station, "Oldham". While I welcome his commitment to increasing the number of stations and trains stopping in our borough, could the Cabinet Member please make sure that TfGM know where their train stations are, as Mossley is in Tameside? Would the Cabinet Member also support the principle of increasing the number of trains by ensuring a twice hourly service	Thank you for your question Cllr Al-Hamdani The GM Mayor announced earlier this year plans to bring rail services into the Bee Network. Initially this includes eight commuter rail services that will be part of the new local transport network by 2028, with others to follow. The 8 priority routes don’t at this stage extend to Mossley (within Tameside) or Greenfield (within Oldham) but do include Manchester Victoria to Rochdale, including Mills Hill station which is used by Oldham residents. This means that passengers will be able to pay for their journeys on these commuter rail services by tapping in and tapping out

		at Greenfield Station, and also write to the Head of Rail supporting this?	with contactless payments. Fares would be capped at a maximum daily rate for buses, trams and trains.
Cllr Garth Harkness Tuesday 17 th December 1:18pm	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Decent Homes	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?	Thank you for your question, Cllr Harkness. 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.
Cllr Louie Hamblett Tuesday 17 th December 1:18pm	Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Don’t Trash Oldham	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 it’s original capacity so that blue badge holders can have proper access to parking without the current congestion?	Thank you for your question, Cllr Hamblett. The 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

			<p>car parking strategy work and we will look to support additional capacity where possible.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Cllr Alicia Marland</p> <p>Tuesday 17th December 1:18pm</p>	<p>Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Can 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?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Martland</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Work remains ongoing by the team who remove over 1,300 tonnes of leaves from the borough's roads and footpaths every year.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Cllr Dave Murphy</p>	<p>Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Value for Money</p>	<p>Tracking the progress of decisions made by this Council is an integral function of local democracy. It is vitally important that, when this Council agrees to take an action, decisions are recorded accurately and published in an open and accountable way.</p>	<p>Thank you for the question Cllr Murphy, I agree with you that this council should uphold the principles of democracy with pride, and we strive to operate in an open and transparent way at all times.</p>

Tuesday 17 th December 1:18pm	& Sustainab ility	Will the Cabinet Member therefore ensure that, all letters sent issued as a result of a resolution of Council are published on the Council website, circulated to members and attached to minutes of meetings?	I'll ask our constitutional services team to look at how we can improve the visibility of actions and responses of the council.
Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani Tuesday 17 th December 1:18pm	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability	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?	Thank you for your question Cllr Al- Hamdani. I do not see that the departure of the Director of Finance will 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 if the process whilst we appoint a replacement.
Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani Tuesday 17 th December 1:18pm	Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	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.	Thank you for your question Cllr Al-Hamdani I can 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.

		<p>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?</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Cllr Garth Harkness</p> <p>Tuesday 17th December 1:18pm</p>	<p>Cllr Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member for Enterprise</p>	<p>The government have been talking recently about getting more people into work and looking at the welfare system to reduce the number of unemployed. I welcome these objectives. I have previously raised concerns over the implementation of the Universal Credit and welfare reforms. Work needs to be done around people who can work but are unwilling. Will the cabinet agree that previously that the oversimplification, and money saving have taken priority over a minimum family income and work incentives? Will they agree that providing skills, support and realistic targets should be prioritised over sanctions?</p> <p>And Does the Cabinet Member support the Labour Government's policy of pushing people with mild or severe learning difficulties, mental health, autism, or other impairments into work by fully removing their welfare payments?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Harkness.</p> <p>The Government recognises that we need to do more to support people into good work. The Mayor launched the Good Employment Charter where companies are assisted to work with their employees to create good working environments, which includes providing help with mental and physical health conditions. The Government's Get Britain Working paper sets out that as a society we need to do more to help residents to stay in work and to help those out of work access to support to move back into employment. This is critical if we want to lift families out of poverty. The Government's reforms are clearly set out to be supportive in nature and not punitive.</p> <p>The government will test new approaches and collect robust evidence on how to tackle the root causes of ill-health related inactivity, support young people who are 'not in education, employment, or training' (NEET), and help people to develop their careers</p> <p>As part of the Get Britain Working package, the government will establish eight trailblazer areas across England and Wales that bring together health, employment and skills services to improve</p>

			<p>the support available to those who are inactive due to ill health and help them return to work</p> <p>DWP is changing how Job Centres will operate with them being more proactive in providing access to the support citizens need linked to health and education reforms.</p>
<p>Cllr Helen Bishop</p> <p>Tuesday 17th December 1:18pm</p>	<p>Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability</p>	<p>People can lose their jobs, have an accident or develop serious illness or disability. Those who have transfer onto Universal Credit from another benefit or those going through a reassessment receive nothing. If you are in social housing then the landlord may accept the delay but for the growing number in private rented they would not. Will the cabinet member look at the hardship fund to support with council tax arrears but also push to ensure that people do not have to live on fresh air?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Bishop.</p> <p>We understand that residents can experience sudden and difficult changes that have a significant and long-lasting impact. We can award exceptional hardship payments via the Discretionary Council Tax Discount Policy to offset council tax payments where residents find themselves in need of help and support. We have also used the Household Support Fund to bolster our financial support schemes available to residents this Winter. This includes help to keep homes warm, to feed families and cover the cost of essential items as well as supporting our Local Welfare Provision scheme.</p> <p>Increasingly we are finding through our Welfare Rights service and commissioned Citizens Advice Offer that even when we have explored every avenue to support residents to maximise incomes, it can be difficult to get by and to lead a decent quality of life. We are doing our bit here in Oldham, but we need to see system change including the government’s Get Britain Working white paper published last week recognising the link between a more integrated system linking health and work.</p> <p>I urge anyone experiencing financial hardship this winter to call our Helpline on 0161 770 7007. Between Christmas and New</p>

			Year the service is available 10am-2pm on the 27, 30 and 31 December.
Cllr Diane Williamson Tuesday 17 th December 1:18pm	Cllr Arooj Shah – Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham	Residents who need mobility vehicles are often only presented with the option of an electric vehicle, but in some areas of our borough often struggle to access adequate electric charging. What is the Cabinet Member doing to ensure that electric vehicle charging infrastructure is made available in every corner of Oldham; especially with a view to supporting disabled residents?	Thank you for your question Cllr Williamson With more people choosing electric vehicles and electric mobility scooters, we are developing an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy for Oldham. As well as providing an overall vision and ambition for EV charging across the borough, the strategy will be supported by a 3-year action plan that will look to improve the current EV infrastructure through both public and private investment. One of the fundamental aims of the strategy is to ensure coverage across the borough for EV charging, including for residents with no access to off-street parking. The strategy and action plan is due for completion early next year.
Cllr Dave Murphy Tuesday 17 th December 1:18pm	Cllr Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member for Enterprise	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?	Thank you for your question Cllr Murphy. 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.

<p>Cllr Pam Byrne</p> <p>Tuesday 17th December 5:35pm</p>	<p>Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham</p>	<p>Gulley Cleaning??</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. We are acutely aware of this issue and what it means to the residents of the borough. It is for this reason that we started a boroughwide programme which aims to clean all 47,500 gullies over the next 18-20 months.</p> <p>Our aim is to work on a ward-by-ward basis to maximise efficiency. This means that we cannot always respond to one-off requests or incidents, something which becomes more of an issue after periods of heavy rain and leaf fall.</p> <p>Ad-hoc visits will delay the cycle, and therefore, Council is not currently accepting reports of blocked gullies except under emergency circumstances. This means that if a gulley is blocked and a property is at risk of flooding or there is a particular highway safety issue, we will visit and clear that and reports can be made through the normal channels. This approach remains unchanged, and we will continue this moving forward.</p> <p>Once the programme is complete, we are hopeful that the data we are capturing will allow us to have a better and targeted approach which means that we will be able to focus our programming in the future.</p>
<p>Cllr Dave Arnott</p> <p>Wednesday 18th</p>	<p>Cllr Elaine Taylor – Cabinet Member for</p>	<p>Union St - Royton</p>	<p>Thanks for your question Cllr Arnott.</p> <p>The Council is aware that number 12 Union Street has been converted into a number of flats.</p> <p>A letting agent has been in touch with us offering the units for temporary accommodation – as is often the case, we get offers</p>

<p>December 7:58am</p>	<p>Decent Homes</p>		<p>from letting agents regarding property across the borough every week.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Cllr Christine Adams</p> <p>Wednesday 18th December 7:58am</p>	<p>Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing</p>	<p>One Oldham Fund – Community Grants Programme</p>	<p>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</p> <p>These grants have been awarded across a range of outcome themes, including health and wellbeing, hate crime, children & young people, cost of living.</p> <p>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.</p>

			<p>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</p>
<p>Cllr Dave Arnott</p> <p>Wednesday 18th December 7:58am</p>	<p>Cllr Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member for Enterprise</p>	<p>Apprenticeships in Oldham</p>	<p>In September, the Government 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.</p> <p>We are committed to ensuring our young people and our business community can access the right skills provision to grow our economy.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>

			<p>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.</p>
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