

**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, A Hussain, F Hussain, J. Hussain, S. Hussain, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Islam, Jabbar, Kenyon, Kouser, Lancaster, Malik, Marland, McLaren, Moores, Murphy, Nasheen, Navesey, Quigg, Rustidge, Shah, Sharp, Sheldon, Shuttleworth, Sykes, Taylor, Wahid, Wilkinson and Woodvine.

**1 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hurley, Mushtaq and Williamson.

**2 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (reconvened to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025), 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025 (Extraordinary Meeting – Request for an inquiry into CSE), 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025 (Extraordinary Meeting – Places for Everyone), 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (appointment of Chief Executive and the designation of Section 151 Officer) and 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (Budget Meeting), be approved as correct records.

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

Councillor Ghafoor declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 10 (Motion 1 – Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) and he left the room during the consideration of this Motion.

Councillor Chowhan declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 10 (Motion 1 – Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) and he left the room during the consideration of this Motion.

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

The Mayor thanked members of the Council for their patience and understanding during his two-year term as Mayor of the Borough of Oldham.

The Mayor advised Council that Motion 2, at agenda item 11 (Expressing disappointment at government failure to compensate WASPI Women) would be moved by Councillor Marland, rather than by Councillor Bishop, as previously indicated on the meeting's agenda.

The Mayor indicated that he was minded to vary the order of the agenda, insofar as item 13 (Review of Political Balance on Committees) would be considered after agenda item 6 (Petitions). Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Ghafoor SECONDED this variation to the agenda and, on being put to the vote, it was CARRIED.

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

Further to recently received correspondence from Jess Phillips MP, Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls (a copy of which was contained in the supplementary agenda), the Mayor allowed the Chief Executive to speak, updating members on issues relating to the CSE enquiry.

The Mayor allowed the Leader, Councillor Shah, to address members, further to the decision by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to refuse the request from the Council to withdraw from Places for Everyone.

The Mayor reported that the timings for the Motions to be considered at item 11 (Notice of Opposition Business) be allocated as follows: Oldham Group's Motion – 10 minutes, Liberal Democrat's Motion - 10 minutes, Conservative's Motion – 5 minutes and the Independent Councillor's Motion – 5 minutes.

**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 Youth Council PROPOSED the following MOTION:  
**Young People's Mental Health**

Since 2012, young people have been telling the youth council that mental health is an issue that they face every day and that they need support now. Since this time we have only seen the need for mental health services increase, especially since the COVID pandemic, and although spending on Mental Health services has increased, it has not dented the need for support seen across Oldham and in the UK.

At the last election, Labour had several manifesto points to improve mental health support for children and young people and we would like to see these implemented as soon as possible.

Council recognises that over the past few years the Oldham Youth Council have made 'Mental Health' a priority issue, with it coming in the top 5 issues for Make Your Mark. The council also recognises that we have undertaken much work in this area to improve the experiences of Oldham's young people. This includes:

- Oldham Youth Council first commissioned Kooth.com, an online mental health counselling service, for Oldham's young people.
- 2013 motion to Council asking for an overview and scrutiny of mental health services.
- 2017 motion asking to ensure that adequate funding is made available to schools and colleges to allow them to invest in the early intervention mental health services.
- 2021 motion asking to secure mental health funding for Oldham.
- Our work with Oldham Theatre Workshop, highlighting mental health and how professionals can work with young people called Standard Day.
- Our work with Oldham Theatre Workshop, highlighting self-harm, called Boy in the Black.
- Our campaign called SNAP that promoted Kooth.com and the support they provide for depression, stress/anxiety and eating disorders.
- Our campaign 'I Love Me', raising young people's self-esteem and confidence.

#### Council notes:

- That mental health issues have risen, with a 12% increase in cases since pre COVID.
- That consultation undertaken by the Youth Council would suggest schools and teachers are still not able to fully support young people's mental health.
- That according to several official sources the average waiting time to get an appointment for Mental Health assessments in Oldham is 16-18 weeks.
- That consultation undertaken by the Youth Council would suggest that while the average wait time is 16-18 weeks some young people could wait for up to 6 months for an initial assessment and that the wait for treatment could be over a year after that appointment.
- In 2022/23, just under £1B was spent on Children and Young People's mental health compared to the £12.8B on all mental health services. This was despite the understanding that 50% of mental health illnesses in adults start showing symptoms by the age of 14, and 75% experience symptoms before they are 24.
- Labour's manifesto said that in the first term they would invest in front line services recruiting 8,500 new staff to reduce waiting times.
- That the manifesto also said that labour's new Young Futures Hubs would have open access to mental health support for children and young people in every community

Therefore, we propose that **Council resolves** to complete an overview and scrutiny study of Mental Health service's waiting times (including CAMHS) and ask the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister and Secretary of state for Health to request an increase to children and young people's mental health services spending without reduction in spending on adult mental health; to again ask the Government to ensure that adequate funding and resources are made available to schools and colleges to allow them to invest in the early intervention services; and for an update on their manifesto commitments.

Councillor Harrison spoke in support of the Motion  
Councillor Bishop spoke in support of the Motion

## **RESOLVED**

Council resolves to:

1. Complete an overview and scrutiny study of Mental Health service's waiting times (including CAMHS).
2. That the Chief Executive be requested to write to the Prime Minister and to the Secretary of State for Health to ask for an increase in children and young people's mental health services spending without any reduction in spending on adult mental health; to again ask the Government to ensure that adequate funding and resources are made available to schools and colleges to allow them to invest in the early intervention services; and for an update on their manifesto commitments.

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## **REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE ON COMMITTEES**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Jabbar SECONDED a report of the Assistant Director of Strategy and Performance that advised members that since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, on 18<sup>th</sup> December (adjourned until 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025), the Chief Executive had received notification that Councillors Adams, Arnott and Sheldon had resigned from the Conservative Group. Councillors Adams and Arnott were to henceforth sit as Independent Members, whilst Councillor Sheldon had joined the Oldham Group on 27<sup>th</sup> March, having sat as an Independent Member since his resignation from the Conservative Group in January 2025. In this regard, Councillor Ghafoor addressed Council, welcoming Councillor Sheldon into the Oldham Group.

Considering this, the Council reviewed the political composition of committees and considered the composition of the political groups as previously notified under Regulation 8 (1) of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and under Section 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year. The effect, in terms of committee places was that the Conservatives would cede seats on the Planning Committee, Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board, Employment Committee and the Highway Regulation Committee to the four Independent Members (Councillors Adams, Arnott, Ball and Wilkinson) and their seat on the Commons Registration Committee to the Oldham Group. The Independent Members would cede their seat on the Audit Committee to the Oldham Group.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the revised composition of the political groups as shown in paragraph 1.1 be noted.
2. The number of seats on the various Committees for the remainder of the 2024/25 Municipal Year be as detailed in paragraph 1.5.

3. Any outstanding appointments to be delegated to the Chief Executive in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group.
4. That nominations for one seat on each of the Planning Committee, Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board, Employment Committee and the Highway Regulation Committee be sought from the four Independent Members who are not aligned to a political group and nominations for seats on the Commons Registration Committee and the Audit Committee be sought from the Oldham Group.

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## **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

### **1. Question from Christine Turner**

There are exceptions to Permitted Development legislation that allow elected and unelected officials to support residents with negotiating telecom infrastructure, such as, planning dropped kerbs, building driveways, and householders' deeds, which restrict overhead infrastructure. Are officials aware they can support their constituents in these circumstances?

IXW's poor practices have recently endangered ENW engineers and the public by installing poles too close to electricity lines. Is Oldham Council willing to risk constituents' safety by allowing this company's reckless behaviour?

Can cabinet members confirm any changes to the Government's guidance for telecoms companies on best practices for installing new equipment?

Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Decent Homes replied thanking Ms. Turner for her question, noting that the Council was aware of concerns raised about IX Wireless' infrastructure and how their contractors are installing it. However, unfortunately, there are no exceptions to permitted development legislation that allow the council as local planning authority to intervene, as you suggest.

In relation to highways permits, council officers have liaised with IX Wireless recently on the installation of their infrastructure by contractors and, for a time, withdrew all permits to IX Wireless whilst they provided comfort to us that they and their contractors would improve their procedures for installations. They have now done so, and we are granting highways permits, where appropriate, to IX Wireless again.

In terms of guidance from the Government for telecoms companies on best practice for such installation of new equipment, ultimately, we as a local planning and highways authority are governed by legislation and regulations, and none of the relevant planning and highways related legislation and regulations for communications infrastructure have recently changed.

### **2. Question from Mark Rowe**



During the recent council meeting Councillor Shuttleworth raised an important point on housing development. The council lead did not have the information to hand but promised to supply councillors Shuttleworth with the information. How will the answer to that question be conveyed to the residents and voters of Oldham?

Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Decent Homes replied, thanking Mr Rowe for his question. The council recently published its Annual Monitoring Report, which includes data on planning applications and housing permissions, such as that asked about by Cllr Shuttleworth.

Ordinarily questions we receive advance notice of are published on the Council's website after the Council meeting, however in this case there was an honest mistake made in the proceedings and even though Cllr Shuttleworth had given notice of his question. In relation to Cllr Shuttleworth's specific questions, he asked:

**1. Within the last five years, how many housebuilding applications have been granted?**

Over the past five years (2019-2024), a total of 420 applications (for 3,854 homes) have been granted.

**2. In which districts have such applications been submitted and for how many properties?**

Applications have been approved in all districts (the most in North – 1,251 homes, and the least in West – 410 homes).

**3. How many approved developments have yet to see a spade in the ground?**

73% of the homes granted permission have either been completed or are under construction, leaving only 27% of the homes granted permission on sites where we are yet to see "a spade in the ground".

**3. Question from Nicola Brown**

In February 2024 Councillor Sykes wrote to the CEO and Leader asking as only 13 councillors had valid DBS checks what actions they would take to ensure due diligence was carried out and by when it would be expected for all to have one. Twelve months on can the Leader confirm the number of Councillors who have valid DBS checks? If below 60, are steps being taken to address this, and when can we expect all 60 Councillors to have one? Should any Councillor fail the DBS check, will this information be shared and will they be removed from office?

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Value for Money and Sustainability replied thanking Ms Brown for a really important question.

Council can't force members to complete a DBS check but we do encourage them to do so, it also means Council can't remove a member from Office should they 'fail' a DBS check.

What's clear is that there have been some issues recently regarding member DBS checks and as a result Officers are

currently working on a new member DBS Policy that will require all members to have a DBS check and all Cabinet and Committee members to have an enhanced DBS. This report will be finalised within the next few months and brought to cabinet seeking approval later in the year.

The new policy will mean that we are going above the recommendations of the Independent Review carried out by Simon Bailey to ensure we operate to the highest standards and the public can have confidence in political representatives.

We will engage the group leaders for their support and take the policy to Standards Committee to make a recommendation to Council. We will look at the practical ways that we can support Councillors to apply for a DBS check to make the process as smooth as possible.

#### 4. Question from Shadab Qumer

I've seen publicity about Tommyfield Market traders moving soon to their new home in the Spindles. Could the Leader of the Council clarify when this is taking place and what range of market stalls will be trading from the new venue?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham replied, thanking Mr Qumer for his question. The Council is currently planning the move with market stallholders and a final moving date will be decided and confirmed once the specific fitouts of the individual stalls are all confirmed and agreed.

We expect the actual move to be in the summer and we will announce a formal opening date once this is jointly agreed with the stallholders.

I'm really pleased that to reconfirm as we did when we announced the Community Regeneration Fund, we'll be covering some of the moving costs and new equipment for traders, and the market will include over 50 businesses from the current Tommyfield Market, with others moving into larger units in Spindles and other areas of the Town Centre.

Our market traders are a really important part of our town centre and I'm pleased, on a personal level, about how we've managed to work closely with them over the last two years. I can't wait until the new market opens this summer and for our residents to get in there and support them to thrive as we begin this new chapter.

#### 5. Question from Hannah Roberts

The Millgate Theatre in Delph is a community theatre offering live theatre, music and film run by and for local people based in a historic building in a Conservation Area. The Saddleworth Players will be 100 years old in 2027. What support can the Council give towards the Building for the Future fundraising campaign to preserve and extend the work at the Millgate including developing the Saddleworth Players youth group?

Councillor Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture replied, thanking Hannah for her question. The Council are currently in the process of transferring the freehold of the property to the Arts Centre to allow them to apply for external funding to complete the structural works to the building and preserve it for future generations.



#### 6. Question from Kathryn Phillips

I am really dismayed that WH Smith has put up all of their high street shops for sale, including the one in the Spindles. This was announced just after it became public the Post Office is also under threat. What can the Council do to make sure there is an easily accessible Town Centre Post Office? Is it possible for a Crown Post Office to be reopened?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham replied thanking Kathryn Phillips for her question.

I was really disappointed to see that WH Smith had decided to close their Oldham shop, it's unfortunate that another big high street brand has taken the decision to step away from town centres. But we've already had inquiries about the future use of the space and I'm hopeful that we'll attract a retailer that Oldhamers want to shop at and conversations are ongoing. Turning to the matter of the town centre post office, the Post Office have been working towards appointing a new Post Master for the town centre since WHSmith announced their decision to close their store in Spindles. They are following their usual application process for the new opportunity, which we have been told by those who know slightly more about this that it can be a lengthy process.

Applicants are required to submit a business plan which includes details of the premises in which they operate or plan to operate. So, because the council is keen to retain the Post Office within the town centre we have worked via our appointed letting agents to help this process as much as we can.

We have received a number of enquiries from interested parties about details of available units in Spindles for a new post office, and our letting agents have agreed costs and lease terms with a number of potential franchisees.

It is now up to the Post Office to select their preferred Post Master. This is a confidential process with the Post Office and unfortunately, we can't provide an update until the Post Office confirms they have appointed a new operator.

#### 7. Question from Lewis Farnworth

My question is about pip payments due to the cuts on PIP that those unable to work are you going to carry on taking pip contribution to care despite the National Labour party reducing PIP payments which will leave the most vulnerable in poverty?



Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adults Health and Wellbeing replied thanking Mr Farnworth for his question. People in receipt of adult social care services are required to be means tested to determine eligibility for financial assistance with care costs.

Through the financial assessment process people are asked about their earnings, including pensions and benefits they are in receipt of to calculate their individual financial situation.

As a result of the recent announcements and changes to Personal Independence Payments it is likely that people in receipt of this benefit will need to be reassessed, as a result of their income changing. As per the legislation we're operating within we have a duty to continue to financially assess people and the income they are in receipt of, which is a consistent and fair approach.

Essentially, we need to remember, that this is a change that is being processed through a Green Paper, and as such opportunities for consultation will take place.

#### 8. Question from Mark Rowe

During council debates the use of Jargon particularly by portfolio leads in my experience is prolific. Whilst councillors may well understand the jargon used the general public, including me, do not. Can the council explore ways of limiting the jargon used. There are a number of cost effective solutions to this issue. For example a crib sheet for attendees, or a jargon notes list on the You Tube channel.

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham, replied thanking Mr Rowe for his question, noting that it raises an important point. Elected members are public representatives, and council officers are public servants. For both the key word there is "public", and we should all remember that the public should always come first. We should therefore always try to speak in plain English. We should always avoid jargon. Sometimes we may need to use technical language but when we do, we should always explain it. The Local Government Association has a glossary which sets out some of the commonly-used, but often not understood, terms in local government and I would recommend it to members of the public. It is available at [lga.gov.uk/glossary](http://lga.gov.uk/glossary). But, more importantly, I'll take this opportunity to remind my Cabinet colleagues and the officers present that we should always strive to speak in a way that the public understands.

#### **QUESTIONS TO LEADER AND CABINET**

In respect of this agenda item Councillor Woodvine MOVED and Councillor Lancaster SECONDED that Council Procedure Rule Part 4a, section 2.1.3 be suspended to permit Councillor Woodvine to ask a question to the Leader of the Council, if time runs out on this item. On being put to the vote, the Motion was LOST.

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 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025, Urgent Decisions taken during 2024/25, the Minutes of the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 and 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and the minutes of the meeting of the AGMA Executive Board held 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

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

**Question 1: Labour's Austerity Politics**

Thank you, Mr Mayor. The new Labour Government has been in office for nearly a year now. Let's have a look at their record so far.

Labour started by refusing to lift the two-child cap on universal credit. A measure that would have taken more than 11,000 children in our Borough out of poverty.

Next, they plunged 85% of pensioners in our Borough into uncertainty by announcing cuts to winter fuel payments, including nearly 8,000 pensioners who are over the age of 80. Then came the hike in National Insurance tax for employers. One of the side effects has caused the cost of social care services to rocket in our Borough. And put a real squeeze on small businesses. We also have the scandalous cuts to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – which is a lifeline for so many people across our Borough. It's there for a reason, to support people who can't work because they have health conditions that aren't going to get better, like Parkinson's and MS!

Labour nationally have also abandoned their support for WASPI Women.

My question for the Leader is a simple one. Nearly a year into this Labour Government. Almost a year of Austerity with a red rosette... is this what she thinks people voted for?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that the government had only been in office, so far, for nine months and had inherited a very bad situation from the outgoing Conservative government. The country's economic outlook was much more serious than first anticipated. Councillor Shah added that the current administration was committed to providing proper levels of support for the residents of the Borough of Oldham.

Question 2: Getting the Basics Right

Thank you, Mr Mayor,

The most common issues that fill our inboxes are to do with potholes, overgrown footpaths, blocked drains or the state of our local parks and green spaces.

These are the basics. And if my inbox is anything to go off...

Oldham Council is dreadful at getting the basics right.

In July 2023, Oldham Labour voted down a Liberal Democrat Motion which aimed to improve basic frontline services through cross party working.

In fact, for many years now, Oldham Labour have consistently voted against plans put forward by the Liberal Democrats to invest more in roads, footpaths, parks and green spaces.

Worse still... Labour have cut environmental services staff which will mean the basics will get worse not better across the Borough.

That's certainly true when it comes to the state of the gullies and pavements.

For months now, the council's fleet of six small sweepers has been consistently breaking down and, on some days, there has been no functioning sweeper at all. I understand there might be some light on the horizon but why have we waited for our fleet to be clapped out and broke before we start to replace it?

Meanwhile, littering and dog-fouling offences continue unabated, with the Council failing to issue Fixed Penalty Notices with any meaningful consistency or to come up with stronger solutions to tackle the issue.

Oldham Borough is deemed to be one of the fly-tipping hot-spots of the North-West.

Does the Leader accept that this Council is failing to get the basics right?

And does she agree with me that a real way to show Leadership would be to make these basic services the subject of a Scrutiny Review this summer so that councillors of all parties and none can get involved and drive improvements together for the benefit of the citizens we all serve?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that the responsibility for the reduced levels of service, referred to in the question, rests with the former Conservative government, that consistently reduced local government funding during the years that they were in power from 2010 until their defeat at the 2024 General Election.

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

Councillor Taylor presented her report.

Councillor Woodvine referred to the reply from the Secretary of State Housing, Communities and Local Government, which rejected Oldham Council's request to withdraw from the Places for Everyone scheme, further to the joint letter of the Leader and Chief Executive, which had sought withdrawal from the scheme, following the extraordinary Council meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March. Councillor Woodvine suggested that the joint letter did not fully represent the wishes of the Council that had voted to withdraw from Places for Everyone.

Councillor Taylor replied, rejecting Councillor Woodvine's comments, adding that the Council had sought independent legal advice which had found that there was no justification for the Borough of Oldham withdrawing from Places for Everyone.

Question from Councillor Akhtar, which welcomed the recent announcement from the Cabinet Member regarding £3 million investment to tackle the Borough's housing crisis, seeking confirmation that a previous commitment to establish a cross-party working group to look at this still applied.

Councillor Taylor undertook to provide a written answer to Councillor Akhtar.

Question from Councillor Arnott – the old Oddies Bar in Royton was, he believed being converted into a hotel as was another former bar/public house in Royton, close by. Councillor Arnott asked, if there were any plans to use either, or both, of these premises, to house asylum seekers?

Councillor Taylor replied that she would meet with Councillor Arnott, in the near future, to discuss this matter with him.

Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani - the Housing Act 2004 clarifies the definition of a house in multiple occupation (HMO), replacing the definition under the Housing Act 1985. The definition of an HMO is found in Part 7 of the 2004 Act. There are three tests that can be carried out to see if a building is an HMO: the standard test for HMOs; the self-contained flat test; and the converted building test.

How many buildings has Oldham Council defined as an HMO, by year, excluding those which are defined as such by licensing or by planning, since 2020?

Councillor Taylor undertook to provide Councillor Al-Hamdani with a written answer to his question.

Question from Councillor Nasheen - The Labour Government removed the need for Secretary of State approval of wider Selective Licensing schemes last December. What plans does the Council have to use this new freedom to improve private sector standards across the borough?

Councillor Taylor replied that having secured additional funding from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Oldham Council is looking to expand the selective licensing scheme in conjunction with the Greater Manchester Mayor.

In order to ensure guidance is followed and the scheme is correctly applied, a research exercise has been commissioned to determine the extent of the areas that will fall within a selective licensing scheme.

We anticipate that this exercise will be completed later this year and in accordance with the guidance, the scheme will come into effect in early 2026.

In the meantime, the private sector housing team continues to respond to a range of issues raised by tenants in Oldham and uses a range of legal powers to ensure compliance and property standards.



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

Councillor Jabbar presented his report

Question from Councillor Quigg - Oldham Councillors voted to sell shares in the Greater Manchester Councils Pension fund because they invest in British defence, fuel and mining companies that may sell goods to and in Israel.

Companies like BAE systems help keep Britain's Armed Forces equipped. They help keep the Royal Navy afloat, Trident Nuclear submarines deployed and the RAF in the sky. At this time of global threats should this Council not be proudly investing in British defence companies?

Can the Cabinet member responsible clarify:

1. What discussions were held before the vote or after the vote to sell holdings in perfectly legal British companies, and whether a valuation has been carried out on the sale of existing shareholdings and the value such as sale would have on staff pensions and what the cost would be to sell this many shares in fees, commission and tax due to the sale of existing holdings?
2. Given it concerns staff pensions can they confirm what legal advice was provided and why no impact report was provided to advise members on the implications of such a decision?
3. Will the Council be demanding that Oldham erase its proud history with BAE systems who once provided hundreds of skilled jobs, and does Oldham Council not want Boeing and Honeywell, Shell, BP and Glencore to bring jobs and investment to Oldham all to appease those who hate Britain?

Councillor Jabbar replied stating that he believed that Cllr Quigg had fundamentally misunderstood what the motion passed at Council called for.

The motion in question asked that GMPF outline a divestment plan from fossil fuels and arms to ensure that members pensions are aligned with Oldham's and GMCAs climate goals. In short:

1. No such discussions were held as the motion did not mandate the sale of shares in any companies. It requested that GMPF begin a process of divestment. The Pension Fund can choose not to do so.
2. Impact reports are not usually provided on motions to Council, unless they specifically ask for it.
3. No of course not, this is performative nonsense once again from Cllr Quigg. To suggest that wanting ethical investments is paramount to hating Britain is shameful.



Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani - recent years, the Council has been using local small businesses to pay out Household Support Vouchers, who then claim the money back from the Council.

I have been approached by a number of businesses who have found the very small payments available for managing the scheme not worth the amount of time it takes. They are faced by hostile claimants, and they have to keep cash on site which makes them vulnerable, and they have to wait to get the money back once they have paid it out.

I have also been told – but not yet had verified – that there have been some businesses who have been charging claimants an administration fee for processing the claim.

Will the Cabinet Member consider finding an alternative way to manage providing this money to residents?

Councillor Jabbar replied, thank you for sharing the feedback from the businesses you have spoken to. We were advised by our supplier that the outlets were provided 1½ weeks' notice to prepare for issuing the cash. The method of payment was identified for residents to access the monies locally. We hope that the additional footfall to the outlets supported local businesses.

For any potential future schemes, we will assess whether additional measures are required, such as improving communication with residents and considering alternative payment methods to support a cash first approach wherever possible.

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

In the absence of Councillor Mushtaq the report was moved by Councillor Mohon Ali, with a request that any specific questions arising from the report be submitted in writing to Councillor Mushtaq.

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

Councillor Mohon Ali presented his report.

Question from Councillor Bishop - Schools will be receiving only a 0.7% rise in funding. This is below inflation and will nowhere near cover the rising costs. Many local councils are in a deficit in terms of high needs funding and Oldham council has just gone into this category. Thanks to inaction by government, SEND funding continues to be a ticking time bomb and with spending reviews like this so will school funding overall.

Will the cabinet member be lobbying his colleagues in government to fund schools properly and to address the SEND funding crisis?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied that there was significant financial pressure on schools generally and specifically in relation to services for children with SEND. As stated in my council motion, I welcome the steps being taken by this Labour Government to finally review and reform the SEND system in England. Additionally, however, I can assure the Cllr that I, along with all my fellow cabinet members, will continue to ask government, as part of its comprehensive spending review, to address the deficit in High Needs Spending by Local Authorities and put spending to support children with SEND on a sustainable footing.

Question from Councillor Iqbal – I think Oldham Virtual School supports the education of children looked after, as well as the initiatives in the report can the Cabinet Member outline what else this service delivers?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied that Oldham Virtual School supports the education of children looked after and has recently extended its duties for children previously looked after and those in kinship care. Education is monitored through Personal Education Plans and there is an extensive programme of Raising Aspirations. Examples include courses in skills like cookery and university visits. More details are available in the Virtual School Annual Report which was presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in January 2025.

Question from Councillor Davis - It is great to see that the NEET figures are dropping thanks to targeted intervention. Is this something that will continue to be a priority for the council or are we at risk of this figure creeping back up?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied that The Council is focussed on supporting young people to progress into education, employment and training. For instance, we have recently worked hard to attract both the YMCA and North Lancs Training back into Oldham. This means we now have more training opportunities available for our young people. We continue to work hard with our commissioned partners, Positive Steps, to support all our young people into employment and training opportunities. Our ambition is to build upon this positive trend with the development of the Government's Get Britain Working Youth Guarantee when it is rolled out.

f. Councillor Fida Hussain, Cabinet Member for Enterprise

Councillor Fida Hussain presented his report

Question from Councillor Quigg - : Can the relevant Cabinet member please confirm: - If background checks (including criminal record checks for fraud and criminality) are completed on those who use the HIVE in the Spindles?

- If any elected members have any conflict of interest with any business that uses the HIVE in the Spindles?
- If the Council is permitting use of the HIVE in the Spindles to be used as a registered business address?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied that the Hive co-working space is managed by Upturn Enterprise and is open to any business to join as a member, with access levels of daily, weekly and monthly membership. Oldham Council is not involved in assigning co-working space.

We're proud to work in partnership with Upturn who have an amazing track record in supporting Oldham businesses.

We're sure that Upturn would be more than happy to show councillors around The Hive and demonstrate how valuable the space is to Oldham's business community.

Question from Councillor Kenyon - as the UK copes with the impact of Trump's 10% tariffs on exports to the US, does the Cabinet Member have any idea how many Oldham and Greater Manchester businesses and jobs are reliant in on trading with the US?

What is the council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority doing to help them? What is the council's assessment of President's Trump's actions?

Councillor Fida Hussain – that the recent announcements from the United States are a concern for the UK and we are working with our partners across Greater Manchester to assess and understand potential impacts on our businesses.

We are mindful that with the tariffs in the UK being lower than those imposed on other areas including the EU at 20% and many Asian countries also being much higher, there may also be new opportunities for UK businesses to compete including local businesses, and we are keen to ensure our business community are prepared to seize any opportunities that might emerge.

We are echoing the advice of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, by asking that our local companies proactively assess how they will be impacted across supply chains, understanding rules of origin and putting in place a duty management plan.

Business can contact us via [invest@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:invest@oldham.gov.uk) and we can connect them with specific support at this time.

Question from Councillor Sajed Hussain - I'm delighted to see in the report that good, skilled jobs are coming to Oldham with the opening of a facility in Fitton Hill by Cygnet Health Care. Are there other opportunities that the council is pursuing to ensure that more good jobs come into the borough?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied that the investment by Cygnet Health Care and their collaboration with the Get Oldham Working team has meant that Oldham residents secured 61% of the jobs created.

As a Council we are committed to creating jobs through our Creating a Better Place strategy and through the development of new areas for businesses, such as Atom Valley.

Question from Councillor Woodvine – has the Council undertaken equality impact assessments, in respect of recently introduced government policies designed to facilitate economic growth, to help to safeguard local businesses?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied that, whilst he was aware that the number of businesses operating in Oldham had recently increased by around 15%, he would present Councillor Woodvine with a detailed written answer to his question.



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

Councillor Brownridge presented her report.

Question from Councillor Harrison, the report highlights the ongoing consultation on the NHS plan – what examples of good practice from Oldham can be included to help improve the NHS more widely?

Councillor Brownridge replied that she was pleased to be able to say that Oldham is already well ahead of the Government on this agenda.

Our integrated care partnership is the style of model the 10 Year Plan is likely to advocate.

This is enabling us to work collaboratively to shift activity out of hospitals and closer to communities.

Our Community Diagnostic Centre is one example of this. With the Council working to unlock planning, the NHS committing to Capital development we now have one of the most envied CDCs in the region which means people are now accessing diagnosis tests for things like cancer much faster and closer to where they live.

Question from Councillor Harkness – I have been contacted by a long-standing community campaigner and former parish councillor in Saddleworth around the topic of loneliness.

He has produced a document with significant amount of work in this area and has asked questions of the council, such as how can lonely individuals readily gain information about organisations that help the lonely – especially with access to digital services?

Are hard copies of helpful information available? Or PDF versions that could be shared?

Through the Health & Wellbeing Board, would the council consider conducting an assessment into existing schemes and services targeting loneliness and isolation across the borough? Identifying any examples of 'good practice' and establish a plan of promoting and enabling these to work.

Councillor Brownridge replied that there are a wide range of social activities available in communities locally. Action Together, our local infrastructure organisation for the voluntary and community sector, have a searchable database of community activities on their website. There are also a range of activities hosted in local libraries and leisure centres, information is available in those centres and on their respective websites.

The Council commissions a Social Prescribing service which is available to residents experiencing social isolation or loneliness. Leaflets are available (and can be shared) providing residents with the details of how to access the service directly, or via a referral from their GP, social worker or other professional. The service works with approximately 3,000 residents per year, supporting them to build confidence and access activities and support in their communities.

We will take the item to a future health and wellbeing board for further partnership discussion and will seek to include representation from the ICB who lead on the Living Well Approach - which seeks to help people achieve good mental health in community settings.

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

Councillor Goodwin presented his report

Question from Councillor Lancaster which sought clarification on signage on highways relating to the Clean Air Zone – a proposed scheme that was finally dropped in January 2025. Councillor Jabbar replied to this question, adding that plans were afoot to remove the signage referred to by Councillor Lancaster to be removed.

Question from Councillor McLaren - Can you give an update on the council's road maintenance programme as I saw in the paper that if we don't demonstrate that we are fixing potholes we might lose some funding?

Councillor Goodwin replied that the approved 2024/25 capital highways programme was completed according to schedule and we are currently putting together the overall capital infrastructure highways programme for 2025/26. This will include the carriageways programme and details will be shared/approval sought in the coming weeks.

The Council has a team of specialist Highways safety inspectors who constantly carry out inspections across all 800km of the highways network according to planned and risk assessed routes based on national standards. Among other issues, potholes are identified and repaired according to timescales determined by individual risk assessments. Members' and residents' queries are investigated and actioned in parallel.

As to the government's recently announced initiative, the reporting required is likely to be much more than simply pothole data – we have provided significant information to central government for many years – as a result of this reporting, Oldham Council has received its full share of capital funding.

As a result, and although the reporting requirements are changing, details of which are awaited, we do not expect to lose out on additional financial support as we are meeting the existing criteria.

Question from Councillor Akhtar which sought clarification as to whether Ward Councillors will be consulted on the borough-wide gulley cleaning initiative?



Councillor Goodwin replied that he had spoken to the Officers responsible for delivering the gulley cleaning scheme and Ward Councillors would be consulted thereon.

Question from Councillor Shuttleworth - 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?

Councillor Goodwin replied that 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.

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. 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.

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.

i. Councillor Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture

Councillor Dean presented his report.

Question from Councillor Cosgrove - after Operation Vulcan launched in March, residents have come to me with lots of positive feedback about the action they have seen taking place. Can you give an update on the results that have been achieved and what the long-term plan is for Derker when GMP end the operation?

Councillor Dean replied that he was pleased to hear the positive resident feedback. I can report in the first month of Vulcan Derker, there has been:

- A stakeholder launch with over 100 delegates giving commitments to the project.
- A community launch held in the heart of Derker at Mayfield Primary School involving a presentation on the project, with questions and answers from the residents of Derker.
- 3 days of action with partners
- 5 warrants executed
- 29 stop searches
- 25 arrests
- 2 safeguarding referrals
- £11,000 cash seized
- £50,000 worth of class A and class B drugs seized
- 7 weapons seized
- 21 vehicles, including e-bikes seized

Vulcan has a three-strand approach – clear, hold and build. The project is currently in the clear stage with planning starting for the hold and build stages. The Neighbourhood Policing Team will have a continued presence in the area with proactive partnership working continuing when the Vulcan Team move to another location.

Question from Councillor Arnott who asked if the Cabinet member will join him in congratulating Oldham Rugby League Football Club on reaching the semi-final of the Challenge Cup, meaning they are just one game away from an appearance in the final at Wembley.

Councillor Dean replied congratulating Oldham Rugby League Football Club on their success and wished them the best of luck for their upcoming semi-final.

Question from Councillor Byrne noting the activities being undertaken by community and voluntary organisations across the Borough and asked if the Cabinet Member would support their work.

Councillor Dean replied stating that he was happy to fully endorse and support the work and activities being undertaken by community and voluntary organisations across the Borough.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Leader and Portfolio Holder reports be noted.
2. That the Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025; Urgent Decisions taken during 2024/25; the Minutes of the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 and 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025; and the minutes of the meeting of the AGMA Executive Board held 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025, be noted.

**NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS**

**Motion 1: Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's)**

Councillor Taylor MOVED and Councillor Davis SECONDED the following Motion:

This Council notes with concern the increasing number of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Oldham and the impact this has on local communities, housing standards, and infrastructure. While HMOs can provide an important source of affordable accommodation, their proliferation in certain areas has led to issues including overcrowding, pressure on local services, and a decline in housing quality. In the past 5 years the number of licensed HMOs in Oldham has almost doubled.

This Council further notes that current national planning regulations allow certain HMOs (Class C4, up to six residents) to be established without the need for planning permission. This limits the ability of local authorities to manage their spread and ensure they are appropriately located and regulated.

This Council welcomes the recent announcement by the Chancellor of an additional £2 billion for social and affordable housing. This funding provides an opportunity to address the shortage of genuinely affordable homes and to ensure that people in Oldham have access to safe, secure, and high-quality housing.

This Council calls on the new Labour Government to reverse the changes introduced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition Government in 2010 which removed the requirement for planning permission for small houses of multiple occupation.

This council further requests that the Chief Executive writes to the borough's 3 MPs and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, asking for their support in reversing the aforementioned changes.

#### AMENDMENT 1

Councillor Sharp MOVED and Councillor Quigg SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

This Council will immediately implement a Borough wide Article 4 Direction which would require planning permission for a change of use.

A recorded vote, in line with the Regulations was then taken on AMENDMENT 1 as follows:

COUNCILLOR		COUNCILLOR	
Adams Christine	FOR	Hussain Junaid	AGAINST
Akhtar Shoab	AGAINST	Hussain Sajed	AGAINST
Al-Hamdani Sam	FOR	Ibrahim Nyla	AGAINST
Ali Mohon	AGAINST	Iqbal Nadeem	AGAINST
Ali Zaheer	ABSENT	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	AGAINST
Arnott Dave	FOR	Jabbar Abdul	AGAINST
Aslam Naseem	AGAINST	Kenyon Mark	FOR
Azad Montaz Ali	AGAINST	Kouser Aisha	AGAINST
Ball Sandra	FOR	Lancaster Luke	FOR
Bishop Helen	FOR	Malik Abdul	AGAINST
Bashforth Marie	AGAINST	Marland Alicia	ABSENT
Brownridge Barbara	AGAINST	McLaren Colin	AGAINST
Byrne Pam	FOR	Moores Eddie (Deputy Mayor)	AGAINST
Charters Josh	AGAINST	Murphy Dave	FOR
Cosgrove Angela	AGAINST	Mushtaq Shaid	APOLOGIES

Chowhan Naveed	ABSENT	Nasheen Umar	AGAINST
Davis Peter	AGAINST	Navesey Lisa	AGAINST
Dean Peter	AGAINST	Quigg Lewis	FOR
Ghafoor Kamran	ABSENT	Rustidge Ken	AGAINST
Goodwin Chris	AGAINST	Shah Arooj	AGAINST
Hamblett Louie	FOR	Sharp Beth	FOR
Harkness Garth	FOR	Sheldon Graham	AGAINST
Harrison Holly	AGAINST	Shuttleworth Graham	AGAINST
Hince Marc	AGAINST	Sykes Howard	FOR
Hindle Neil	AGAINST	Taylor Elaine	AGAINST
Hobin Brian	AGAINST	Wahid Abdul	AGAINST
Hughes Jade	FOR	Wilkinson Mark	FOR
Hurley Maggie	APOLOGIES	Williamson Diane	APOLOGIES
Hussain Aftab	AGAINST	Woodvine Max	FOR
Hussain Fida	AGAINST	Chauhan Zahid (MAYOR)	AGAINST

On a recorded VOTE being taken 17 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of AMENDMENT 1 with 36 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 0 ABSTENTIONS. AMENDMENT 1 was therefore LOST.

#### AMENDMENT 2

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

This Council notes with concern the increasing number of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Oldham and the impact this has on local communities, housing standards, and infrastructure. While HMOs can provide an important source of affordable accommodation, their proliferation in certain areas has led to issues including overcrowding, pressure on local services, and a decline in housing quality. In the past 5 years the number of licensed HMOs in Oldham has almost doubled.

This Council also notes that:

- On 1 November 2023, it resolved to direct officers to “collect and collate evidence on the number of HMOs in each ward across the Borough, identifying clusters and report back to the relevant cabinet member if any case can be made for an Article 4 direction”.
- Current national planning regulations allow certain HMOs (Class C4, up to six residents) to be established without the need for planning permission. This limits the ability of local authorities to manage their spread and ensure they are appropriately located and regulated.

- No figures are currently available on the number of HMOs in the

borough – only for the number of licenced HMOs (which meet one definition) or for HMOs which have received planning permission (which meet a separate definition).

- There are standard tests which allow the Council to define whether any building is an HMO, as defined under the Housing Act 2004.
- Councillors have been told that they cannot be informed of forthcoming HMOs for licensing, due to data privacy.
- Councillors have no right to make a representation to the Council on HMO licence applications and renewals.
- The Council has let licenses for HMOs lapse on multiple occasions, sometimes for up to a year.

This Council welcomes the recent announcement by the Chancellor of an additional £2 billion for social and affordable housing. This funding provides an opportunity to address the shortage of genuinely affordable homes and to ensure that people in Oldham have access to safe, secure, and high-quality housing.

This Council calls on the new Labour Government to reverse the changes introduced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition Government in 2010 which removed the requirement for planning permission for small houses of multiple occupation.

This council further requests that the Chief Executive writes to the borough's 3 MPs and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, asking for their support in reversing the aforementioned changes.

This Council calls on the Cabinet Member responsible to provide a report back to Council at the soonest opportunity on the work that has been carried out to establish whether a case can be made for an Article 4 direction; to continue efforts to establish that case, and to report back on a regular basis.

This Council will wherever possible ensure that any building being used as an HMO is defined as such, with a view to ensuring that any work towards an Article 4 direction is provided with the best available information.

This Council will provide information on forthcoming HMO applications, with any personal information removed.

The Council will establish a right for Councillors to make representations to the Council on HMO licence applications and renewals.

A vote was taken on AMENDMENT 2 which was CARRIED.

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



**RESOLVED:**

1. This Council welcomes the recent announcement by the Chancellor of an additional £2 billion for social and affordable housing. This funding provides an opportunity to address the shortage of genuinely affordable homes and to ensure that people in Oldham have access to safe, secure and high-quality housing.
2. This Council calls on the new Labour Government to reverse the changes introduced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition Government in 2010 which removed the requirement for planning permission for small houses of multiple occupation.
3. This council further requests that the Chief Executive writes to the borough's 3 MPs and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, asking for their support in reversing the aforementioned changes.
4. This Council calls on the Cabinet Member responsible to provide a report back to Council at the soonest opportunity on the work that has been carried out to establish whether a case can be made for an Article 4 direction; to continue efforts to establish that case, and to report back on a regular basis.
5. This Council will wherever possible ensure that any building being used as an HMO is defined as such, with a view to ensuring that any work towards an Article 4 direction is provided with the best available information.
6. This Council will provide information on forthcoming HMO applications, with any personal information removed.
7. The Council will establish a right for Councillors to make representations to the Council on HMO licence applications and renewals.

**Motion 2: Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND)**

Councillor Mohon Ali MOVED and Councillor Nasheen SECONDED the following Motion:

This Council notes that In Oldham, as of January 2024, there were **8,694 pupils identified with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**. This represents **18.8% of the school-age population** in the area. Among these, **6.0% have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP)**, while **12.9% receive SEN support**.

The positive improvements to services for children and young people with SEND in Oldham continue at pace, led by the SEND Local Inclusion Partnership Executive Board chaired by Dame Christine Lenahan. This new governance structure has improved strategic planning and focused on: improved access to health services; better quality and more timely Education, Health and Care Plans and Annual Reviews; smooth transitions between early years, children's and adult services. This has been achieved by focusing on co-production with parents,

carers, and young people. Our aim is to ensure children with SEND are safe, healthy, happy, and able to achieve their potential



The Department for Education has confirmed Oldham has made good progress.

There is significant pressure on the services for children with SEND in Oldham and across England, and this Council welcomes the steps being taken by the Labour Government to reform the system put in place in the 2014 Children and Families Act.

This Council further notes the launch of '*Inclusion in practice*' evidence-gathering project to help shape a reformed SEND system that delivers better experiences and outcomes for all children focused on identifying and sharing practical, scalable solutions for inclusion in mainstream schools.

This Council welcomes the commitment to produce a White Paper to overhaul the SEND system with the aims of ensuring: support is put in place far more quickly for children who need additional support; much earlier identification of need; much more timely intervention and support.

**This Council resolves to:**

- Encourage Oldham Schools to submit examples of good practice to '*Inclusion in practice*'
- Support the LGA's call for urgent action in the Spending Review to address the deficit in High Needs Spending by Local Authorities and put spending to support children with SEND on a sustainable footing.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

**RESOLVED:**

**The Council resolves to:**

1. Encourage Oldham Schools to submit examples of good practice to '*Inclusion in practice*'
2. Support the LGA's call for urgent action in the Spending Review to address the deficit in High Needs Spending by Local Authorities and put spending to support children with SEND on a sustainable footing.

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**NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS**

**Motion 1: Tackling Fly-Tipping and Exploring Free Bulky Waste Collection to Reduce Costs**

Councillor Ghafoor MOVED and Councillor Wahid SECONDED the following Motion:

**Council Notes:**

1. Fly-tipping is a persistent and worsening issue in Oldham, causing environmental damage, attracting anti-social behaviour, and placing a significant financial burden on the Council.

2. In the last year alone, Oldham Council responded to **5,672 fly-tipping incidents**, costing over **£600,000** in cleanup and enforcement efforts.
3. **Over 69% of fly-tipping in Oldham occurs in back alleyways (53%) and on highways (16%)**, with a significant proportion of this waste consisting of bulky household items such as sofas, mattresses, and white goods.
4. Currently, residents must pay **£23 to dispose of up to three bulky waste items**, plus **£7 per additional item** and **£10 per fridge/freezer**. This financial barrier discourages responsible disposal and contributes to illegal dumping.

#### **Council Believes:**

1. The cost of clearing fly-tipped waste often **far exceeds** the revenue generated from bulky waste collection charges.
2. Reintroducing a **free three-item bulky waste collection service** could significantly reduce the number of items being illegally dumped in alleyways and on highways.
3. If, for example, **10,000 households** accessed the free service annually, the lost revenue would be **£230,000 per year**. However, if this measure led to a substantial reduction in fly-tipping, it could generate net savings by reducing cleanup and enforcement costs.

#### **Council Resolves to:**

1. Commission an urgent cost-benefit analysis comparing the potential savings from reduced fly-tipping against the costs of reintroducing a **free three-item bulky waste collection service** for residents.
2. Explore external funding opportunities or efficiency measures within waste management services to support this initiative.
3. Request that the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services reports back to full Council within **three months** on the financial implications and potential impact of this policy change. By taking a proactive approach, this Council can tackle the root causes of fly-tipping, keep our alleyways and highways clean, and ensure taxpayers' money is spent more effectively.

On being put to the Vote the Motion was LOST.

#### **Motion 2: Expressing disappointment at government failure to compensate the WASPI Women**

Councillor Marland MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED the following Motion:

The 1995 and 2011 Pension Acts saw the State Pension age for women rise from 60 to 66 but the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) consistently failed to adequately communicate these changes. As a result, tens of thousands of women were plunged into poverty. One-in-four affected women struggled to buy food and one third fell into debt. This was an avoidable scandal.

A landmark Ombudsman report in March 2024 told the Government to pay compensation and apologise to 3.6 million,

women born in the 1950's who were affected by the lack of communication in relation to their State Pension age. The report concluded ministers failed to properly notify those impacted by the changes. However, the DWP – under the new Labour Government - has indicated it does not accept the findings of the report.



Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) calls for fair and fast compensation for the financial and emotional hardship caused by DWP failures. WASPI argues for the highest level of compensation for the worst affected, i.e., women who had the shortest notice of the longest increase to their state pension. The worst affected women received just 18 months' notice of a six-year increase to their state pension age. WASPI continues to call for: *All Members of Parliament to support the urgent delivery of fair and fast compensation to all those affected; and compensation scheme proposals should be brought before MPs to vote on as quickly as possible.*

This Council notes that more than 11,600 WASPI women across Oldham Borough stand to lose out on compensation after the Labour Government decided to ignore the independent ombudsman's assessment and go against their long-held policy to support WASPI women. It is estimated that the compensation owed to impacted women across Oldham Borough would be a minimum of £11,642,500.

This Council notes that previous Labour Leaders of this Council have referred to the situation facing WASPI women as "an injustice" and as recently as March 2023, Oldham Labour were still campaigning to put that injustice right.

This Council reasserts its support for the WASPI women and regrets the decision of the Labour government to ignore an independent ombudsman's assessment that compensation should be paid to them.

Council resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Liz Kendall MP asking her to look again at this decision.

Council further resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the three MPs who represent Oldham Borough as well as the Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, calling on them to publicly support justice for WASPI women.

#### AMENDMENT

Councillor Harrison MOVED and Councillor Nasheen SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

The 1995 and 2011 Pension Acts saw the State Pension age for women rise from 60 to 66, the 2011 Act being supported by the Coalition Government and steered through Parliament by the Pensions Minister, Liberal Democrat MP, Stephen Webb.

Unfortunately, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) consistently failed to adequately communicate these changes from 2011 despite the Act bringing forward to November 2018 an increased pensions age for women to 65. As a result, tens of thousands of women were plunged into poverty. A recent survey by the WASPI Campaign of its members found that one-in-four affected women struggled to buy food and one third fell into debt. This was an avoidable scandal.

A landmark Ombudsman report in March 2024 told the Government to pay compensation and apologise to 3.6 million, women born in the 1950s who were affected by the lack of communication in relation to their State Pension age. The report concluded ministers from the Coalition and Conservative Governments failed to properly notify those impacted by the changes.

However, the DWP – under the new Labour Government - has indicated it does not accept the findings of the report. Compensation to up to 3.5m women ranging from £1,000 to £2,950 each would cost between £3.5bn and £10.5bn. A 2006 survey found that 90% of affected women knew about the planned changes in pension age.

Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) calls for fair and fast compensation for the financial and emotional hardship caused by DWP failures. WASPI argues for the highest level of compensation for the worst affected, i.e., women who had the shortest notice of the longest increase to their state pension. The worst affected women received just 18 months' notice of a six-year increase to their state pension age. WASPI continues to call for: All Members of Parliament to support the urgent delivery of fair and fast compensation to all those affected; and compensation scheme proposals should be brought before MPs to vote on as quickly as possible. However, the Ombudsman's report only addressed the issue of communicating the planned changes and did not recommend compensation for the change itself.

This Council notes that more than 11,600 WASPI women across Oldham Borough stand to lose out on compensation after the Labour Government decided to ignore the independent ombudsman's assessment and go against their long-held policy to support WASPI women. It is estimated that the compensation owed to impacted women across Oldham Borough would be a minimum of £11,642,500.

This Council notes that previous Labour Leaders of this Council have referred to the situation facing WASPI women as “an injustice” and as recently as March 2023, Oldham Labour were still campaigning to put that injustice right.

This Council also notes that despite the parlous state of the public finances and scorched earth policy pursued by the previous Conservative Government, the current Labour Government has committed to the ‘triple’ lock on the state



pension which means the state pensions is rising by £470 a year in April 2025.



This Council reasserts its support for the WASPI women and regrets the previous Conservative Government's delay in responding to the Ombudsman's report leaving the incoming Labour government to decide whether the independent ombudsman's assessment that compensation should be paid to them.

Council resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Right Hon Liz Kendall MP asking her to look again at this decision.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. This Council notes that more than 11,600 WASPI women across Oldham Borough stand to lose out on compensation after the Labour Government decided to ignore the independent ombudsman's assessment and go against their long-held policy to support WASPI women. It is estimated that the compensation owed to impacted women across Oldham Borough would be a minimum of £11,642,500.
2. This Council notes that previous Labour Leaders of this Council have referred to the situation facing WASPI women as "an injustice" and as recently as March 2023, Oldham Labour were still campaigning to put that injustice right.
3. This Council also notes that despite the parlous state of the public finances and scorched earth policy pursued by the previous Conservative Government, the current Labour Government has committed to the 'triple' lock on the state pension which means the state pensions is rising by £470 a year in April 2025.
4. This Council reasserts its support for the WASPI women and regrets the previous Conservative Government's delay in responding to the Ombudsman's report leaving the incoming Labour government to decide whether the independent ombudsman's assessment that compensation should be paid to them.
5. Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Right Honourable Liz Kendall MP, asking her to look again at this decision.

**Motion 3: Local Government Review**

Councillor Lancaster MOVED and Councillor Woodvine SECONDED the following Motion:

Local Government in the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham needs to be more democratic, more accountable, and more local.

The cabinet system was imposed on all but the smallest districts under the Local Government Act 2000. The Localism Act 2011 allowed councils to opt for the committee system and created a route for communities to call a referendum on governance arrangements.

Sheffield City Council, Sutton London Borough Council, Kingston-upon-Thames Royal Borough Council, Reading Borough Council, Basildon Borough Council, and Worcester City Council have done this.

We believe that Councillors need to work together and have better decision-making powers.

Therefore, the Conservative Group on Oldham Council request that this Council resolves to:

1. End the cabinet or strong leader model on the Council and revert to a committee system where all councillors, from all parties, will be represented on the council, and will have to take responsibility for key decision-making.
2. The Council immediately begins the appropriate processes needed to implement a committee system on Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council.

#### AMENDMENT

Councillor Quigg MOVED and Councillor Sharp SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

1. Formally write to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England inviting them to carry out a review of:
  - a. The number of councillors needed at Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, but with a specific focus of reducing members.
  - b. Formally request that they look at reducing the number of Councillors by 20. This will save £220,000 per annum.
  - c. The warding arrangements in the Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council with any change or reduction in Councillors to better reflect their makeup as well as reviewing the electoral cycle.

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

COUNCILLOR		COUNCILLOR	
Adams Christine	FOR	Hussain Junaid	AGAINST

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

On a recorded VOTE being taken 19 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with 38 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 0 ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

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

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

On a recorded VOTE being taken 19 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION with 39 VOTES cast AGAINST and

there were 0 ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore LOST.

**Motion 4: Council Tax Reduction for Special Constables**  
Councillor Wilkinson MOVED and Councillor Ball SECONDED the following Motion:

The Special Constabulary consists of volunteer officers, who give up their spare time to assist with the policing of Greater Manchester and Oldham, by increasing the effectiveness of local police initiatives.

Special Constables are considered to be a vital part of the police service, helping to prevent crime and interacting with the diverse communities they serve. Greater Manchester Police are fully supportive of introducing this Special Constable council tax discount.

Noting that in Rochdale, a 50% discount is given and in Trafford a 100% discount is given.

I am aware that there is only Thirteen Special Constables serving in Oldham. If we took an average figure of £2000 per special, then we are only talking of a figure of £26.000 if they claimed the 100%. Of the thirteen, it may well be that not all of them live in Oldham.

To qualify for this reduction, special constables must meet the following criteria. Liable to pay council tax, live in Oldham, volunteer in Oldham and complete a probation period and complete at least 1 year of service in Oldham. (same criteria as Trafford)

I have received statistics for the last 3 years that Special Constables have worked.

2022- 5696 hours £99.680

2023- 4444 hours £77.770

2024- 3392 hours £59.360

This has been calculated on a 2/3 year pay scale of £17.50 per hour of a full time Police Officer

This Council resolves to:

1. Request that the Chief Finance Officer produces a report within 28 days for approval to Cabinet to provide a 100% discount from the payment of Council Tax to Special Constables who live and serve in the Borough of Oldham.
2. The creation of a Section 13A (Local Government Finance Act 1992) policy and procedure to include the discount above, be approved.

A vote was taken on the MOTION which was LOST.

#### **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

18<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (adjourned to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025) 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 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (adjourned to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025), be noted and confirmed.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 9.15pm