

Amendment to Motion: Investing in West End Street Pitch, Coldhurst – Resurfacing West End Street Pitch and Reclaiming Merton Fields for Open Community Use

Proposer: Cllr Abdul Malik

Seconder: Cllr Abdul Jabbar

Council Notes:

~~1. Historic and Ongoing Underinvestment in Coldhurst Community Facilities. Coldhurst has experienced long-standing neglect in relation to youth and community sports infrastructure. Notably, the closure of Robin Hill Youth Centre — followed by the sale of the site to a private developer — resulted in the permanent loss of a vital youth provision hub. The play space adjoining the site has since deteriorated and is now deemed unplayable.~~

- Coldhurst, like many working-class communities across the country, has suffered from years of national government austerity and underinvestment in youth and community sports infrastructure. Notably, the closure of Robin Hill Youth Centre and the loss of the adjoining play space reflect the wider challenges imposed by more than a decade of cuts to local government budgets.

~~2. Condition of West End Street Weather Pitch.~~

- The pitch at West End Street, once a popular and well-used grassroots football and recreation space, has fallen into disrepair. The surface is cracked, drainage is poor, and markings are faded — making it unsafe and unfit for its intended use.
- Coldhurst Labour councillors — notably Cllr Abdul Jabbar and Cllr Abdul Malik — have worked consistently to highlight these challenges and advocate for improvements at West End Street, in close collaboration with local residents, volunteers and youth groups.
- That thanks to an intervention by Cllr Jabbar, the West End Street pitch was included in Oldham's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (2025) agreed by Cabinet in March this year.

~~3. Community Effort and Engagement In 2024–25, local volunteers, youth groups, and councillors began efforts to clean and reclaim the West End pitch. These community-led actions show a strong appetite for investment and governance of grassroots sports infrastructure.~~

- In 2024–25, local volunteers, youth groups, and councillors — including longstanding Labour representatives — continued efforts to clean and reclaim the West End pitch. These actions build on work led by Coldhurst Labour councillors and Jim McMahon MP, who have been working on a masterplan to bring this asset back into full community use through the establishment of a community co-operative.

~~4. Council's SportsTown Investment and Community Commitments.~~

- The Council has endorsed committed £6 million as part of the first phase of a £70 million "SportsTown" regeneration programme, which includes:
 - The Council administered a £5 million grant from the Government's Community Regeneration Fund to develop a new 3G pitch at Little Wembley, a new stand educational centre at Boundary Park, and supporting community facilities.
 - £1 million was invested from Oldham Council for a new stitched pitch at Boundary Park and to secure a permanent base for Oldham Rugby League Football Club and enhanced community use.
 - Public commitments that SportsTown will benefit community access borough-wide, including increased opportunities for education, health, and sport.
- These investments demonstrate the Council's commitment to ensuring regeneration funding reaches communities like Coldhurst, building resilience and opportunity where it's most needed.

- ~~5. Merton Fields — A Missed Opportunity. Another key green space in Coldhurst, Merton Fields, has been leased to Hulme Grammar School. However, the land remains undeveloped and unused. In light of recent financial pressures facing private schools — including VAT changes on tuition fees — Hulme Grammar appears to be selling off assets rather than investing in facilities.~~

Council further notes:

- That West End Street Pitch and associated changing rooms exist because of the work of Cllr Abdul Jabbar to secure a grant from Sports England and SRB1 in 1998.
- Both Cllr Malik and Cllr Jabbar have consistently raised the condition of West End Street pitch with officers and Cabinet colleagues and continue to explore opportunities for resources to improve the facility for the community.
- That in February 2025 all five of Oldham's district community councils had the opportunity to input into Oldham's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (2025) and there was unanimous agreement amongst elected members that West End St pitch is a vital community resource and must be protected and enhanced.
- That a community consultation day will be held over the future of West End Street pitch over the summer.

Council Believes:

- That open-access, local sports facilities such as West End Street pitch ~~and Merton Fields~~ should ~~continue to be fully~~ explored as part of Oldham's wider ambitions for health, youth development, and community regeneration.
- That the borough's regeneration strategies must include local, ward-level opportunities for inclusive sport and recreation.
- That it is in the public interest for the Council to review existing leases, funding options, and strategic opportunities ~~for both sites in consultation with community stakeholders~~
- That residents themselves should have a meaningful say in the use and future of these facilities, and that a community cooperative model should be explored for the West End Street pitch — governed by and for the people who use it.
- The current plan, devised by the Council, ward councillors and supported by Jim McMahon MP to create a co-operative ownership model, will successfully bring this asset back into community use.

Council Resolves to:

- Reaffirm its full support for widening access to local sports and recreation facilities, and recognises that the plan in place for West End Street will help deliver this.
- Request that officers prepare a report for ~~Cabinet and/or the Communities & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee within six months~~ Place Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity, which will:
 - a. Assess the current physical condition, legal arrangements, and ownership or lease status of:
 - West End Street pitch (Coldhurst)
 - ~~Merton Fields (Hollinwood)~~
 - b. Explore further opportunities to:
 - ~~C~~. Consider how existing and future **government regeneration funding** streams might be aligned with the improvement of community sports assets at ward level.
 - ~~D~~. Consult relevant community organisations, residents, and funding bodies in developing options.
 - Secure investment or external funding to improve access and quality ~~of both sites to West End Street Pitch.~~
 - ~~Review or renegotiate lease arrangements if aligned with community benefit.~~
 - Develop open-access use models that prioritise youth, health, and local sport.
 - Consider how existing and future government regeneration funding streams might be aligned with the improvement of community sports assets at ward level.

- Consult relevant community organisations, residents, and funding bodies in developing options.
- Ensure that any resulting recommendations are inclusive, transparent, and aimed at increasing the quality and accessibility of recreational spaces in Coldhurst. ~~and Hollinwood.~~
- Recognise and endorse the ongoing work of Cllrs Abdul Jabbar and Abdul Malik in championing improvements to West End Street, and the long-standing leadership of Jim McMahon MP in supporting regeneration for the Coldhurst community as Member of Parliament and now as a government minister.
- Write to Jim McMahon MP to confirm the Council's formal support for this project and to thank him for his efforts in championing the interests of Coldhurst residents at a national level, and confirm what the government can do to support this.
- Continue to explore the feasibility of establishing a community-led cooperative model to govern the use and programming of West End Street pitch — ensuring the space is managed with and for the local community.

Amended Motion to read:

Investing in West End Street Pitch, Coldhurst

Council Notes:

- Coldhurst, like many working-class communities across the country, has suffered from years of national government austerity and underinvestment in youth and community sports infrastructure. Notably, the closure of Robin Hill Youth Centre and the loss of the adjoining play space reflect the wider challenges imposed by more than a decade of cuts to local government budgets.
- The pitch at West End Street, once a popular and well-used grassroots football and recreation space, has fallen into disrepair. The surface is cracked, drainage is poor, and markings are faded — making it unsafe and unfit for its intended use.
- Coldhurst Labour councillors — notably Cllr Abdul Jabbar and Cllr Abdul Malik — have worked consistently to highlight these challenges and advocate for improvements at West End Street, in close collaboration with local residents, volunteers and youth groups.
- That thanks to an intervention by Cllr Jabbar, the West End Street pitch was included in Oldham's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (2025) agreed by Cabinet in March this year.
- In 2024–25, local volunteers, youth groups, and councillors — including longstanding Labour representatives — continued efforts to clean and reclaim the West End pitch. These actions build on work led by Coldhurst Labour councillors and Jim McMahon MP, who have been working on a masterplan to bring this asset back into full community use through the establishment of a community co-operative.
- The Council has endorsed £6 million as part of the first phase of a £70 million “SportsTown” regeneration programme, which includes:
 - The Council administered a £5 million grant from the Government's Community Regeneration Fund to develop a new 3G pitch at Little Wembley, a new educational centre at Boundary Park, and supporting community facilities.
 - £1 million was invested for a new stitched pitch at Boundary Park and to secure a permanent base for Oldham Rugby League Football Club and enhanced community use.
 - Public commitments that SportsTown will benefit community access borough-wide, including increased opportunities for education, health, and sport.
- These investments demonstrate the Council's commitment to ensuring regeneration funding reaches communities like Coldhurst, building resilience and opportunity where it's most needed.

Council further notes:

- That West End Street Pitch and associated changing rooms exist because of the work of Cllr Abdul Jabbar to secure a grant from Sports England and SRB1 in 1998.

- Both Cllr Malik and Cllr Jabbar have consistently raised the condition of West End Street pitch with officers and Cabinet colleagues and continue to explore opportunities for resources to improve the facility for the community.
- That in February 2025 all five of Oldham's district community councils had the opportunity to input into Oldham's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (2025) and there was unanimous agreement amongst elected members that West End St pitch is a vital community resource and must be protected and enhanced.
- That a community consultation day will be held over the future of West End Street pitch over the summer.

Council Believes:

- That open-access, local sports facilities such as West End Street pitch should continue to be fully explored as part of Oldham's wider ambitions for health, youth development, and community regeneration.
- That the borough's regeneration strategies must include local, ward-level opportunities for inclusive sport and recreation.
- That it is in the public interest for the Council to review existing leases, funding options, and strategic opportunities.
- That residents themselves should have a meaningful say in the use and future of these facilities, and that a community cooperative model should be explored for the West End Street pitch — governed by and for the people who use it.
- The current plan, devised by the Council, ward Councillors and supported by Jim McMahon MP to create a co-operative ownership model, will successfully bring this asset back into community use.

Council Resolves to:

- Reaffirm its full support for widening access to local sports and recreation facilities, and recognises that the plan in place for West End Street will help deliver this.
- Request that officers prepare a report for Place Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity, which will:
 - c. Assess the current physical condition, legal arrangements, and ownership or lease status of:
 - West End Street pitch (Coldhurst)
 - d. Explore further opportunities to:
 - Consider how existing and future **government regeneration funding** streams might be aligned with the improvement of community sports assets at ward level.
 - Consult relevant community organisations, residents, and funding bodies in developing options.
 - Secure investment or external funding to improve access and quality to West End Street Pitch.
 - Develop open-access use models that prioritise youth, health, and local sport.
 - Consider how existing and future government regeneration funding streams might be aligned with the improvement of community sports assets at ward level.
 - Consult relevant community organisations, residents, and funding bodies in developing options.
 - Ensure that any resulting recommendations are inclusive, transparent, and aimed at increasing the quality and accessibility of recreational spaces in Coldhurst.
- Recognise and endorse the ongoing work of Cllrs Abdul Jabbar and Abdul Malik in championing improvements to West End Street, and the long-standing leadership of Jim McMahon MP in supporting regeneration for the Coldhurst community as Member of Parliament and now as a government minister.
- Write to Jim McMahon MP to confirm the Council's formal support for this project and to thank him for his efforts in championing the interests of Coldhurst residents at a national level, and confirm what the government can do to support this.

- Continue to explore the feasibility of establishing a community-led cooperative model to govern the use and programming of West End Street pitch — ensuring the space is managed with and for the local community.