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COUNCIL  
16/07/2025 at 6.00 pm



**Present:** The Mayor – Councillor Moores (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, Goodwin, Hamblett, Harkness, Harrison, Hince, Hindle, Hobin, Hughes, Hurley, A Hussain, F Hussain, J. Hussain, S. Hussain, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Islam, Jabbar, Kouser, Lancaster, Malik, Marland, McLaren, Murphy, Mushtaq, Nasheen, Navesey, Quigg, Rustidge, Shah, Sharp, Sheldon, Shuttleworth, Sykes, Taylor, Wahid, Wilkinson, Williamson and Woodvine

**1 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chauhan, Ghafoor and Kenyon.

**2 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 (Extraordinary Meeting and Annual Meeting), be approved as correct records.

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

There were no declarations of interests.

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

The Mayor advised that item 16 (Member's Allowances Scheme 2025/26) had been withdrawn from the agenda and would be considered at a future meeting.

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

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

There was no Youth Council business for this meeting of the Council to consider.

**8 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

## 1. Question from Roger Blackmore

Will Oldham Council's plans for the former Saddleworth School site include space for social housing and genuinely affordable housing? This site is still waiting to be developed and its position close to the centre of Uppermill could provide a significant contribution to local housing needs. Residents in Saddleworth, especially young people, find it increasingly hard to find genuinely affordable homes. Will Saddleworth be receiving a reasonable share of the 500 social homes the Council is aiming to deliver in the next five years as part of the Housing Delivery Action Plan?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member of Growth replied, thanking Mr Blackmore for his question, adding that whilst full demolition and a number of site surveys have now been completed on the former Saddleworth School site, there are certain property issues that are still being worked through before the site can be taken forward for disposal.

The site does however remain allocated for residential development, and as the property matters are resolved, specific plans with regards to the exact number or type of new homes to be delivered will be drawn up.

I can however assure you that this will include a significant proportion of affordable and social homes, as well as all properties being low carbon housing, thereby supporting the borough's pioneering Green New Deal, with all new homes on Council sites being built to the government's Future Homes Standards on sustainability.

This is a very important site for Saddleworth, given how little land there is under Council control that's suitable for housing in this part of the borough, and we will therefore do all that we can to ensure that we get the right type of housing that benefits as many local residents as possible.

## 2. Question from Magd Sachs

Six months ago Oldham Council committed itself to ensuring ethical investment by the Greater Manchester Pension Fund. With reference to investment in fossil fuels, the urgency of action, in view of the increasing intensity of climate breakdown, is clear.

What update can you provide on the creation a plan for stepping up divestment in fossil fuel companies, and also on ensuring transparency on the investment decisions taken by the Fund?

Who is taking the lead on the actions in the motion?

Can you provide a timetable of actions taken and planned?

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services and Sustainability replied thanking Magda for the question, adding that we all recognise that the climate emergency is one of the biggest challenges facing our times and everyone has a responsibility to do their part.

The Greater Manchester Pension Fund does invest in companies such as Shell and BP as part of its commitment to ensure the best return for members of the scheme. The Fund does recognise the need to ensure that it balances sound investment with an ethical approach and has committed to net

zero by 2050. We can all agree that they should move faster towards this goal and align it better to the Greater Manchester target of 2038.

It believes in constructive engagement with the companies it invests with, arguing for greener practices.

They also invest in renewables which as we all know is the way to a sustainable future.

But we can all agree that they need to go further, faster and I will continue to make that case as Oldham's representative on the body.

### 3. Question from Hannah Roberts

NHS England has pledged to eradicate cervical cancer by 2040 – it affects 3,200 women annually in the UK, and 800 die.

Unfortunately, HPV vaccination rates are below the target of 90%, and the cervical screening target of 80% is also not reached.

Those who miss screening tests will receive home testing kits from January 2026. Can the Cabinet Member for Adults Health and Wellbeing confirm the take up rate of HPV vaccinations in Oldham and what the Council can do to encourage more young people to be vaccinated and to support those who receive home testing kits to use them?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing replied that vaccinations are an essential approach to preventing and reducing spread of disease and infections.

Although HPV vaccination rates are lower than where we would like, Oldham has seen an increase in HPV vaccination coverage for both males and females in Year 8 between 2022/23 and 2023/24. The service is commissioned through Greater Manchester but Oldham continues to promote the vaccine through our school nurses.

In the 2023/24 academic year, 71.1% of 12–13-year-old females in Oldham received at least one dose of the HPV vaccine, which is only very slightly below the national average of 71.3%.

In the 2023/24 academic year, 67.7% of 12–13-year-old males in Oldham received the HPV vaccine, which is also slightly below the national average.

Oldham continues to take a data led approach to identify groups with low uptake for screening programmes including cervical screening. In Oldham, uptake is lowest in some of our ethnic minority communities, and noticeably in our most deprived areas. Greater Manchester commissions the Answer Cancer programme delivered by a number of partners to increase cervical screening rates in areas of lowest uptake. When the home tests become available, the Council will actively work with partners and community groups to promote this.

### 4. Question from Jenny Harrison

The Oldham Times reported that Greater Manchester will receive a £2.5 billion boost to transport spending, including 1000 new electric Bee Network buses and a new tram stop at Cop Road, between Derker and Shaw and Crompton. Can the Cabinet Member for Transport give us any further information

about how this funding will benefit Oldham and when we can expect the Cop Road stop to open?

Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways replied that on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025, the Chancellor of the Exchequer visited Rochdale to announce devolved 'Transport for City Regions' funding for regional transport infrastructure. The Chancellor's announcement confirmed that Greater Manchester is set to receive £2.5 billion of a national £15.6 billion pot – the full amount set out in the previous government's indicative allocation in October 2023. This funding runs from March 2027 to March 2032 and will form part of Greater Manchester's Integrated Settlement.

The indicative programme for Transport for City Regions funding sets out an aspiration to deliver 1000 new electric buses on to the network in Greater Manchester. This will include the continued deployment of more electric buses onto the network in Oldham, which will provide benefits such as reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and improved air quality. The investment will also improve the journey quality for residents through newer vehicles.

In terms of the new stop at Cop Road, council officers are supporting TfGM in progressing designs and a business case for the new stop. This business case will set out strategies for funding and delivery. The target date for the stop opening is 2030/2031, subject to successful completion of the design, approval of the business case and securing the necessary funding for delivery.

In terms of other projects, Oldham will benefit from projects such as the proposed Tram-Train Pathfinder, which will connect Oldham, Rochdale, Heywood and Bury. Oldham will also benefit from GM's plans to integrate local rail services into the Bee Network, which will fully join up travel with buses, trams and active travel.

This newly announced funding commitment is just the start of work to deliver Greater Manchester's integrated pipeline ambition. Work to identify, develop and deliver the specific infrastructure priorities in every area of Greater Manchester will take time and work will now progress at pace with local authority leaders. Priorities include:

- Works to enable local regeneration
- Highways maintenance
- Active travel infrastructure
- Vision Zero interventions (including school streets and crossings)
- Bus priority measures.

##### 5. Question from Stephen Ingham

I'd like to congratulate Oldham Athletic on their win at Wembley and promotion back to the Football League. I recently saw an article about work starting at Boundary Park on 'SportsTown' - can the Leader of the Council confirm what benefits SportsTown will bring to the borough and young people in our community?

Councillor Shah, leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Growth replied, thanking Stephen for his question, adding that

SportsTown is a public-private venture between the landowners around Boundary Park to provide enhanced educational, health and sports facilities for Oldham's communities.

This includes new further education and higher education courses which specialise in routes to jobs connected with either health and / or sports – early examples include sports coaching, sports sciences, physiotherapy and other community health provisions like radiography as the facilities are developed.

SportsTown is also about ensuring the professional standard facilities are made available for community clubs and sports to provide enhanced facilities for Oldham's young people aspiring to be the best in their field, and to allow a wider range of sports to benefit like netball, darts, and cricket.

As the works on site develop, I will ensure there is more information available for Oldham's communities about what will soon be available as part of the SportsTown offer.

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## **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 Councillor Shah presented her report, including the Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025, the Minutes of the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and the minutes of the meeting of the AGMA Executive Board held 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

### **Councillor Wahid, Deputy Leader of the Oldham Group**

#### **Question 1: Genocide by Israel in Gaza**

Councillor Wahid refers to what he describes as the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people, by Israeli forces, in Gaza. The Oldham Group have, he adds, consistently displayed solidarity with the citizens of Gaza, since the beginning of the conflict in October 2023, whereas Labour have remained quiet. He asked if the Leader of the Council will acknowledge that actions taken by Israeli forces amount to genocide and will she lobby the United Kingdom's government to do the same. In the same vein, Councillor Wahid, asks if the leader will lobby the government to ensure that British citizens who have participated in the genocide, by Israeli forces, are prosecuted under International Law.

Councillor Shah, in replying to Councillor Wahid acknowledged that his question did not relate to the contents of the report that she presented to this Council meeting, included in the agenda pack for this meeting. Councillor Shah stated her heartfelt

sorrow for the suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza but refused to allow Oldham Council to politicise this issue.



Question 2:

Survivors and family member of survivors welcome the U-turn by the Government to initiate a national enquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation. Councillor Wahid refers to earlier meetings of the Council's Child Sexual Exploitation Steering Group where, he stated, that Councillor Shah had said that people calling for a National Enquiry were jumping on a bandwagon and also described campaigning on this issue as fashionable. Does, Councillor Wahid asked, Councillor Shah regret making those remarks and will she take the opportunity to apologise for making them?

Councillor Shah replied that the issues referred to by Councillor Wahid were raised in a private meeting of the Council's Child Sexual Exploitation Steering Group, which was attended by leaders of the Council's political groups. The information that Councillor Wahid has included in his question should not have been addressed in a public forum, it the way that it was, without context and which misrepresents the discussions that were held in that meeting.

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

Councillor Taylor presented her report.

Question from Councillor Shuttleworth: An article last month, in The Independent, stated that 21% of private rented homes - more than 1m homes - do not meet the Decent Homes Standard, with almost 500,000 privately rented homes affected by category 1 hazards, reserved for issues that pose a serious and immediate risk to health and safety.

What checks do the local authority undertake to ensure that such properties within the borough meet the Decent Homes Standard?

Councillor Taylor replied that the Decent Homes Standard is a set of criteria for social housing in England to ensure properties are safe, in a reasonable state of repair, have modern facilities, and provide a comfortable living environment. The standard is currently under review, with potential implications for the private rented sector through the introduction of the Renters' Rights Bill.

Locally, the Environmental Health team respond to private rented disrepair cases and undertake a detailed Housing Health and Safety rating System inspections to identify category 1 and 2 hazards. So, everyone is aware, category 1 hazards are very serious and the law dictates enforcement action must be taken by the Council when these sorts of hazards are found.

In 2024/25, **910** service requests regarding Housing Standards were reported to the Council and investigated.

In addition, since the introduction of Selective licensing, **477** audits of privately rented properties have been conducted to address Housing Standards.

Question from Councillor Lancaster: Question to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods regarding rewarding volunteers

from the local VCFSE sector?

Councillor Taylor replied that each year Volunteer's Week is held in early June, it is a time to celebrate and thank volunteers. Oldham's VCFSE infrastructure organisation Action Together work with the sector to celebrate the amazing contributions of volunteers across our communities. They shine a light on the power of volunteering, showcase local volunteers and their impact, and thank those who give their time to make a difference. (Volunteer stories can be found here: [Volunteers' Week | Action Together](#))

Alongside volunteering week, Action Together launched the Volunteer Celebration Fund. The grants give VCFSE groups the opportunity to say thank you to their volunteers, recognising the importance of their contribution & commitment. The fund may also be an opportunity for groups to focus on recruitment of new volunteers & in particular to consider how they might look to diversify their team of volunteers by engaging with under-represented communities. There is a fund of £20,000 and groups can bid for up to £500 grants, with 33 groups awarded grants so far this year.

(There are case studies from last year's fund here: [Volunteer Celebration Fund | Case Studies 2024-25 | Action Together](#))

Throughout the year Action Together provide support to volunteer managers across the sector through the volunteering hub. This includes a wide range of training and resources for organisations to support them in implementing good practice in managing volunteers, which includes keeping volunteers engaged and inspired, treating them fairly and rewarding appropriately. (More information about this here: [Volunteer Manager Zone | Action Together](#)) They also provide training for volunteers to prepare them for taking on volunteering roles.

During 24-25 1,139 new volunteers registered with the volunteer hub, 750 applied to new roles, and 1,752 people were engaged through volunteering events.

According to the last State of the Sector review (2021) there are 45,720 volunteers in Oldham (including committee and board members) giving 166,910 voluntary hours each week estimated to be worth £82m per annum.

Question from Councillor Murphy: Given the state of our drains, parks and roads and a rising number of missed bin collections – and given the fact that weeds seem to be going untreated, with no suitable maintenance arrangement in place for well over a year now. What does the Cabinet Member propose to do to demonstrate to residents that the council can get a grip of the basics. And will confirm that following the latest round of cuts we will be left with even fewer Environmental Services staff than we currently have?

Councillor Taylor undertook to provide Councillor Murphy with a detailed written response to his question.

c. Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Resources and Sustainability

Councillor Jabbar presented his report.

Question from Councillor Woodvine: Councillor Woodvine stated that the spending powers for local authorities under the current

Labour government were reducing, so the Council lobby the government in this regard and would Council Tax in the Brough of Oldham continue to rise and, if so, by how much?

Councillor Jabbar replied that the Council lobby the government, on an ongoing basis, to provide more funds for essential services in the Borough.

**Question from Councillor Charters:** Given the continued pressures in Social Care and Temporary Accommodation, how is the Council planning to strengthen financial resilience in those areas for 2025/26?

Councillor Jabbar replied that the aim of the Council is to reduce financial pressures in these areas by both improving how we work and working in a more preventative way, in order to reduce demand.

In terms of Temporary Accommodation (TA), for example, we have worked to reduce the number of households in TA by almost a quarter since numbers peaked, and will continue to build on this work to ensure as many families as possible are able to stay in their current homes, or find an alternative as quickly as possible.

At the same time, we are working with housing partners to identify ways to reduce cost by using different models of procuring TA (for example by leasing housing), and also to improve supply of move-on accommodation to get people out of TA more quickly.

The Council is working proactively to address the rising demand across Social Care services. For example, we are building internal capacity in Children's Services to avoid using costly external placements outside of the borough. We are working with partners on the enablement offer to residents in Adult Social Care and looking at using new technology and building capacity in Borough as part of the Transformation agenda.

As approved at Budget Council in March 2025, the demand growth in these areas was £18m and the Council will continue to robustly monitor and review the delivery of approved savings in these areas. Updates will be included in the Budget Monitoring reported to Cabinet.

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

Councillor Mushtaq presented his report.

**Question from Councillor Bishop:** Could the Cabinet Member provide an update on the latest developments regarding the local inquiry into historic child sexual exploitation in Oldham, which is to be led by Thomas Crowther KC? Additionally, is the Cabinet Member confident that the powers granted to the Crowther Inquiry are sufficient to fully implement the recommendations of the Casey Report? How is the Council ensuring that these recommendations will be effectively addressed through this process?

Councillor Mushtaq replied that, the Home Office is currently working at pace to establish the national inquiry as recommended by Baroness Casey in her Audit, published on 16 June. The national inquiry will be established under the Inquiries Act 2005 and will comprise a national commission that will

initiate local investigations with statutory powers. We are expecting the Home Office to announce further details of the national inquiry shortly and will confirm then what that means for the next steps on a local investigation in Oldham.

Question from Councillor Malik: Can the Cabinet Member confirm how residents can find out about and join in with HAF activities this summer? What kind of activities will be on offer and who will be eligible?

Councillor Mushtaq replied, confirming that the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is running again this summer, and it's a fantastic way for children and young people to stay active, healthy, and connected during the school holidays.

The programme is free for families eligible for benefits-related free school meals, and there's a wide range of activities on offer—everything from sports, drama, and dance to outdoor adventures, arts, crafts, and cooking. A healthy meal is provided each day too.

Families can find out more and book places online through the Council's website or by searching "Oldham HAF". Information is also being shared through schools, children's centres, and community partners, so keep an eye out locally.

Places are going quickly, so we're encouraging eligible families to get involved and make the most of what's on offer this summer.

Question from Councillor Charters: The Castleshaw Air bnb looks to be a brilliant scheme that allows the council to make money from one of its best assets - how are we ensuring that Castleshaw remains primarily a facility for young people in the borough?

Councillor Mushtaq replied that, the focus of the work done at Castleshaw will absolutely remain young people focused with the majority of the adventurous activity continuing to be led by the team.

Over 8,000 young people use the centre each year for all types of activity including walking, hill scrambling, climbing, camping, kayaking and more recently paddleboarding to name a few activities.

The centre is also available for team building and as you mention when there is down time is taking bookings for Air bnb stays.

Question from Councillor Rustidge: The report says 597 children are in the care of the local authority – how many of these children are in in house foster care? And can the Cabinet Member explain what a Mockingbird Hub is and how it can help to support Oldham's Foster Carers?

Councillor Mushtaq replied that 54% of children looked after are placed within internal foster care. This is a number that is comparatively higher than our statistical neighbours.

Mockingbird is a well-established evidence-based initiative designed to support foster carers providing advice and respite from an experienced 'hub' carer who links with up to eight other foster carer placements. The initiative is designed to support

foster carers and provides an extra layer of support to prevent placement breakdowns.

Oldham is progressing well with their Mockingbird project, with two 'hub' carers established and supporting foster families, with a third recently recruited.

Councillor Al-Hamdani MOVED and Councillor Harkness SECONDED that Council Procedure Rule 14 (Rules of Debate) be suspended, for the remainder of this agenda item, to enable more time for non-executive members to put questions to Portfolio Holders. On being put to the vote the Motion was LOST.

- e. Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing

Councillor Brownridge presented her report.

Question from Councillor Ibrahim: Councillor Ibrahim sought clarification on actions that were being taken to stop the spread of measles, following recent outbreaks in the North-West region, especially with regard to vaccinations?

Councillor Brownridge replied that Measles is very infectious and can spread from person to person quickly. Little can be done to prevent measles spreading if people are unvaccinated. The MMR vaccination is the most effective way to control the spread of measles.

We need 95% of the population to be vaccinated or immune to measles to stop the spread of the infection. Nationally, regionally and locally, we do not achieve this. There are outbreaks currently in other parts of the UK, including Liverpool. We had an outbreak recently which mainly involved young children in Oldham. We had seven cases in total. Public Health, UKHSA, NHS GM, and the NCA worked closely to manage the outbreak and stop the spread. We work closely with healthcare workers to ensure that they can recognise measles and respond appropriately. We have a strategic group in Oldham to improve vaccination rates. It is important for everyone of all ages to be fully vaccinated with two doses of MMR to fully protect everyone from measles

Question from Councillor Davis: It is excellent that Oldham does not have a waiting list for care at home services - how will the Council maintain or improve that record during the transition to the new commissioning framework?

Councillor Brownridge replied that the Council was proud that Oldham currently had no waiting list for care at home services. This achievement reflected the strength of the commissioning model introduced in 2019, the dedication of our Adult Social Care teams, and the commitment of our local care providers. It's important that we do need to re-tender the services, not only as the contract is due to expire in March 2026, but also as it provides an excellent opportunity for us to approach the local market. As we move into the new commissioning framework, we will be retaining the same core model, because it works. It

has proven effective in supporting timely, high-quality care, and we are determined to maintain this success.

The new framework will build on this strong foundation, with improvements that include:

- Sustaining close partnerships with providers, ensuring continuity of care during the transition.
- Retaining our commitment to the Real Living Wage, and having this as a contractual requirement, which supports recruitment and retention by valuing care workers fairly.
- Maintaining flexibility in our commissioning model, allowing us to respond quickly to changing needs and demands.
- Strengthening monitoring and oversight, so we can intervene early if pressures emerge (for example, hospital discharges).
- Ensuring social value and benefit to Oldham is realised in communities across the borough, maximising positive social, economical, and environmental impacts on residents and the local area.
- Continuing to develop care at home services alongside health commissioners, that are able to meet complex needs.
- Continue to work with health partners to develop and expand the 'blended role' service offer in the borough.

Through this approach, we are confident that Oldham will continue to deliver responsive, person-centred care at home, with no to little waiting list and a strong, supported care workforce.

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

Councillor Mohon Ali presented his report.

Question from Councillor Harrison: The rollout of Universal Free School Meals and the National Breakfast Club is clearly a welcome step in tackling child hunger and supporting families. However, with only seven schools currently offering free breakfasts in Oldham, how do you plan to ensure this initiative reaches all eligible children across the borough—particularly in areas of highest deprivation—and what early evidence is there that it's having the desired impact on attendance and attainment?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied, that is a really important challenge, and one we've been focused on from the very start. The MegaHub isn't just about introducing young people to the world of tech—it's about breaking down the systemic barriers that have historically kept too many of our residents, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, locked out of these high-growth industries. By being the first borough in Greater Manchester to invest in this programme, we've been clear: Oldham's young people shouldn't have to leave the borough to access world-class opportunities.

That's why we've partnered with industry leaders like IBM, Microsoft, and QinetiQ—not just for prestige, but to give our students direct routes into real careers. These aren't theoretical opportunities—they're tangible pipelines into apprenticeships, training, and jobs.

We're embedding this work into our schools and colleges and making sure the CyberFirst and MegaHub programmes are accessible, not just to the academically gifted, but to all young people with potential. That includes those who may not see themselves in tech—yet. We're working with community groups, parents, and educators to shift that narrative and raise aspirations. And we're thinking long-term. This isn't a one-off project; it's a strategic investment in Oldham's economic future. We want our borough to be known as a centre of innovation, where local talent thrives and stays. It's about giving young people the skills, the confidence, and the networks to succeed—not in 10 years, but right now.

Question from Councillor Harkness: As a leader of a Resourced Provision, I welcome the introduction of a Resourced Provision, SEND unit and alternative provision. The cost to this project appears to exceed what I have experienced with similar schemes in Manchester. Can you provide a breakdown of costs? Is the plan to build new extensions rather than regeneration of the existing buildings? What will be the criteria for these provisions? Will students require an EHCP and will places be available for young people across the borough or is it for the local catchment area of the individual schools?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied, thanking Councillor Harkness for his question and for his ongoing support for the development of Resourced Provision in Oldham.

The new developments are an important part of our strategy to expand inclusive education and improve outcomes for children and young people with additional needs. We have an extensive capital programme of which the three projects you have enquired about form part.

#### 1. Breakdown of Costs

The costs for the development of these provisions vary by site, reflecting differences in building condition, required adaptations, and scale of provision. We will provide you with a more detailed site-specific breakdown in writing for all three projects agreed at Cabinet on 9 June.

#### 2. New Extensions vs Regeneration

Across the wider programme we are seeking to adapt and reconfigure existing school buildings. However, in several cases, extensions or modular builds are necessary due to:

- Lack of suitable space within the existing footprint
- Accessibility and safeguarding considerations
- The need for purpose-built sensory or therapeutic spaces

We are balancing cost-efficiency with delivering long-term, inclusive and high-quality learning environments.

#### 3. Admission Criteria and EHCP Requirement

- Children placed in these provisions will require an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and

placements will be made via the local authority's SEND panel.

#### 4. Access and Catchment

Places in all provisions will be centrally commissioned and allocated via Oldham's SEND placement process. They are borough-wide provisions, not restricted to local school catchment areas. This ensures equitable access based on assessed need rather than postcode.

Question from Councillor Quigg: Could the Cabinet member responsible for education advise what is being done to address the increasing language barriers pupils face in schools given that a number of schools in Oldham no longer have English as their first language. One school in Oldham was found to have 97% of pupils where English is no longer the first language for the majority of pupils.

Can the Cabinet member also confirm if the Council produces material and any translation costs in non-English languages and how much that has cost over the last three financial years?

If it will be discontinuing such services given the cost to the taxpayer and the need for residents to be able to communicate with local service providers in English.

Councillor Mohon Ali replied that school censuses from 2023, 2024 and 2025 show that the proportion of pupils for whom English is an Additional Language is broadly static at 68.5%, 68.1% and 68% respectively. So, the data does not indicate that there are increasing language barriers faced by school pupils.

English as an Additional Language refers to learners whose first language is not English. These pupils often speak another language at home and may require support to develop proficiency in English, often alongside their first language. This support is provided in school.

21 of 107 schools have the proportion of pupils with English as an Additional Language over 50%, i.e. a majority. School level data on English as an Additional Language range from 0% to 98.5%.

The Council's Communications Team doesn't produce materials in non-English languages.

g. Councillor Dean, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure  
Councillor Dean presented his report

Question from Councillor Iqbal: The free gym and swim offer for 14–16-year-olds is fantastic; is there an intention to continue or expand this beyond summer, particularly during other school holidays?

Councillor Dean replied that the free gym and swim pass for 14–16 year olds rolls out again this summer for those eligible to attend HAF provision. This offer has been available for over a year and will continue for the foreseeable future. The passes also include access to fitness classes at any Oldham Active site. The passes are active for 2 months and are renewed when activated, meaning that access to the gym, swim and classes are funded for the whole year.

Question from Councillor Marland: Please could the Cabinet member give an update on the work being done to progress getting Diggle clock tower and loom works back into use? Local councillors had an update some time ago, but we have not heard anything recently. This community asset had funding ring fenced to eventually bring this back into future use as part of the Saddleworth School moving to the Diggle site. Can you confirm that all this funding is still available for the eventual future use of this listed building?

Councillor Dean replied, thanking Councillor Marland for her question, adding that I should just start by saying that I absolutely love this building, and I'm also constantly asking for updates on where we're up to during portfolio meetings because I think it deserves a proper use.

What I can say is that a programme of works has been undertaken to stabilise the fabric of the building. Refurbishment proposals are still under consideration and engagement with the school is on-going as to any future potential use of building.

Obviously given the close proximity to the Saddleworth School there are safeguarding issues that need to be taken into account with regard to future uses.

Question from Councillor Arnott: Councillor Arnott sought an explanation as to why the swimming pool in Royton would be closed over the summer months, including the school holiday period.

Councillor Dean replied that due to contractual arrangements with the firm undertaking the works, the earliest date that they could get on site, to carry out the essential remedial work, was 5<sup>th</sup> August 2025.

h. Councillor Fida Hussain, Cabinet Member for Enterprise Councillor Hussain presented his report

Question from Councillor Murphy: The Labour Government's belated U-turn on the Welfare Bill after significant political pressure is very welcome news. Does the Cabinet Member agree that it is regrettable the Government chose to target people on 'in-work' benefits rather than focus on energy giants, social media companies, or water company bosses? What steps is the Council taking to strengthen access to welfare for those who need it most, including pensioners and people living with disabilities?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied that while national policy decisions are ultimately for Government, here in Oldham we're focused on ensuring residents who need support — including those on low incomes, with disabilities, and older people — get practical help to thrive.

Through Get Oldham Working, we provide wraparound support including skills training, therapy, and in-work progression. We're also working closely with Disability Employment Advisors at the Jobcentre, and developing new projects like the Trailblazer programme and MEA, which aims to relaunch subsidised jobs for people with disabilities.

Our approach combines employment, health and welfare advice, so people can access the right support at the right time —

including pensioners, carers, and those furthest from the labour market.

The Council also offers support through the Welfare Rights team to make sure that residents are able to access the benefits that they are entitled to.

Question from Councillor Sajed Hussain: The feedback from people who have used Get Oldham Working is powerful and shows the impact that the council has on people's lives when dealing with difficult circumstances. Is there any way we can get feedback from employers to see how Get Oldham Working has supported them too?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied, that the Council is incredibly proud of the feedback we receive from individuals who've been supported by Get Oldham Working (GOW), especially those who've overcome significant personal challenges to move into training or employment. But you're right—employers are a vital part of that success story, and their feedback is just as important, and alongside the positive feedback from residents, we've also had strong feedback from local employers about the impact of Get Oldham Working.

We provide free recruitment support, host sector-based training academies, and run bespoke jobs fairs to help employers find job-ready candidates.

One care home manager told us, "We hired 10 people in a month thanks to GOW."

We supported Cygnet Kenney House to fill over 135 roles and continue to help employers with staff retention, wellbeing, and wraparound support like therapy and coaching.

We're also working with schools, the NHS, and exploring 700 new jobs through Iceland's relocation.

Our approach was praised during our recent Matrix reaccreditation, where the assessor highlighted the strength of our employer partnerships.

We also welcome any suggestions or ideas on how we can further enhance our feedback processes — including gathering more insights from employers to continue improving our offer.

Question from Councillor Harrison: The fall in unemployment is very welcome. Can the Cabinet Member explain more about the work done by the Restart Programme and Vanguard? Who takes part and what do the programmes offer?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied, that the fall in unemployment has seen 420 fewer universal credit claimants since March – which is welcome news. Programmes like Restart and Vanguard have helped in supporting residents back into work.

The Restart Programme supports residents who've been out of work for 9+ months, offering personalised help with job searching, CVs, interviews, and wellbeing. Participants have contact at least every two weeks, often weekly, with workshops and tailored support. The aim is for 36% of participants to earn over £5,000, verified through HMRC.

The Vanguard Programme focuses on residents in work but struggling. It offers 1:1 coaching, access to 26 weeks of therapy, gym passes, and strong links with Oldham's social prescribing.

The goal is to help people stay in work, improve wellbeing, and progress their careers.

Both programmes are about more than just finding a job—they're about helping people build skills, overcome obstacles, and move towards a better future at their own pace. And we're seeing real success stories across Oldham as a result.

- i. Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Councillor Goodwin presented his report.

Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani: The Government has put forward plans to invest in regional transport infrastructure, but as of yet there is no indication of any solid plans for high-speed infrastructure which connects Liverpool–Manchester section to the Hull–East Yorkshire section. What will Oldham Council be doing to ensure that plans do not reduce the number of trains running to already underserved stations in and around Oldham including Saddleworth?

Councillor Goodwin replied agreeing that national plans for high-speed rail have had fluctuating commitments, Oldham Council has been actively working to protect and enhance local transport links through its Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Oldham's Transport Strategy aligns with Greater Manchester's 2040 vision, aiming for connections that support sustainable growth and equitable access.

So, while high-speed links between Liverpool and Hull may remain uncertain, Oldham Council is actively working to ensure that local stations like Greenfield are not left behind and, where possible, are better served in the future.

Question from Councillor Akhtar asking for clarification on the list of gullies that have been cleaned across the borough on a ward-by-ward basis.

Councillor Goodwin replied undeaking to provide a written response to Councillor Akhtar.

Question from Councillor Aslam: The new EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy is a welcome development, but how will you ensure equitable access across wards, particularly in areas without off-street parking?

Councillor Goodwin replied that the council is acutely aware of the challenges that we face in parts of Oldham regarding pavement parking, limited off-street parking and EV Charging facilities. We are working with GMCA colleagues and other district areas who are facing similar issues to help find solutions and work this through.

We are also awaiting an announcement later this week from the Department of Transport which may assist us with new solutions to these concerns, as the announcement is expected to include £25 million funding support to allow cross-pavement charging solutions. This is a huge development in the nationally agreed highway standards and will allow residents without driveways to safely run cables beneath pavements for home charging access.

There's also the promise of modernised EV signage on major roads, grants for depot charging, and support for NHS fleet electrification, all as part of a broader £63 million investment to accelerate EV infrastructure nationwide.

Question from Councillor Iqbal: Given the significant number of streets visited and inspections conducted, are there opportunities to share that proactive inspection data with residents to demonstrate improvements?

Councillor Goodwin replied that throughout the year, the Highways service proactively inspects the over 800km of adopted highways according to a planned, risk assessed and prioritised regime – this aligns directly with national standards. This results in all adopted roads/streets being visited as a matter of course, with inspection regimes of monthly, 3 monthly and annually, depending on the assessed category of the road. For example, in the last financial year over 3,750KM of network was inspected by the Council's inspection team equating to 8,588 streets visited. This extensive regime of planned inspections, when combined with ad hoc inspections because of member/public enquiries directly results in constant and ongoing repairs to the highway to ensure the continued safety of our communities.

The data from these inspections, together with annual condition inspections, speed and traffic volume surveys, inform the capital programme process, leading to targeted use of resources to improve the highway condition, and introduce effective safety engineering schemes.

We will review your request to provide better visibility of this data as part of the ongoing review of performance reporting.

Question from Councillor Hamblett: IX Wireless is currently under investigation by Ofcom. Rochdale Council have had poles installed by them removed, as have Bolton. While the Internet Service Providers Association has set out guidance for companies to follow when installing, IX Wireless are not a member. There have been health and safety issues with IX Wireless work in Oldham, and the company have refused to respond to concerns from residents and councillors. When will Oldham Council do the right thing, and support residents in stopping this company from having apparently free reign to do what they like on our streets?

Councillor Goodwin replied that for some time now the council had fully recognised both resident and member concerns regarding IX wireless operations.

From a Planning perspective, IX Wireless have generally followed proper process and applied for Prior Approval for their Masts before installing them. I understand this has not always been the case in Bolton and Rochdale, which led to some IX Wireless Masts being removed. However, the vast majority of IX Wireless infrastructure involves telegraph poles, which do not require planning permission, and so, Local Authorities cannot require their removal under Planning legislation.

From a Highways Permit perspective, where issues were identified during their operations in Oldham that didn't comply with highway safety, Council Officers took prompt and effective

action, resulting in the suspension of IX permits and operations until inspectors were satisfied that they were compliant with legal requirements. Operations were only allowed to restart once compliance was achieved.

We continue to have meetings with IX on a regular basis, just as we do with other major utilities to encourage collaboration and lessons learnt. During all stages, members and residents were updated.

We will continue to monitor the outcome of the Ofcom investigation for implications/learning from an Oldham perspective.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Leader and Portfolio Holder reports be noted.
2. That the Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025; the minutes of meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2025; and the minutes of the meetings of the AGMA Executive Board held 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025, be noted.

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**NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS**

**Motion 1: Article 4(1) direction on small HMOs**

Councillor Hince MOVED and Councillor Hindle SECONDED the following Motion:

Residents are rightly concerned with the number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's) which are currently being introduced across the borough.

We have always believed HMOs are a symptom of the housing crisis and not a solution. In some cases, exploiting some of the most vulnerable people within our community through substandard and unsafe accommodation.

Whilst it is not possible to prevent full planning applications from being submitted, we can act to close the loophole that allows for permitted development rights for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) where between three and six unrelated people share basic amenities, such as a kitchen or bathroom.

Oldham Council currently permits, without the need for planning permission under 'permitted development rights', the change of use of a typical dwelling house occupied by a single household in use class C3, to a property used as a 'small' HMO that is shared by between three and six unrelated people in use class C4.

The Council can, however, adopt an Article 4 Direction to remove these permitted development rights. This will require a planning application to be submitted for change of use from class C3 to C4. This means due process will be applied giving residents a say in what happens in their communities.

We had hoped the government would introduce new legislation to make HMO developers more accountable and give residents

a greater say by making it mandatory for small HMO developers to be licensed with the local authority.

In addition, the government has stated it is committed to removing all asylum applicants (approximately thirty thousand) from temporary hotel accommodation. We believe this action will inevitably mean further demand for HMOs.



We acknowledge and accept that the implementation of Article 4 borough wide will have a significant impact on available resources particularly the Planning Department. Therefore, to enable the council to gear up to meet requirements, the Civil Parish of Shaw & Crompton and Failsworth are to be prioritised with the implementation of Article 4. With Article 4 being extended to the rest of the borough no later than twelve months thereafter.

This Council resolves to:

1. As soon as possible, Cabinet to consider and make a direction pursuant to Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 on a borough wide basis prioritising the Civil Parish of Shaw & Crompton and Failsworth. Withdrawing the permitted development rights to convert a dwellinghouse (C3) to a House in Multiple Occupation (C4) is appropriate, and justified, to prevent harm to local amenity and promote the wellbeing of the aforementioned areas.
2. To delegate authority to OMBC Planning Department to carry out all necessary consultation and to notify the Secretary of State in accordance with statutory requirements.
3. That, the Shaw & Crompton Civil Parish and Failsworth wide Article 4(1) Direction will come into effect once made.
4. To implement Article 4(1) Direction borough wide, no later than twelve months after coming into effect in the aforementioned priority areas.

Oldham Council cannot rely on or hide behind government legislation on this issue. An Article 4(1) Direction can be used to manage HMO concentration and prevent the formation of imbalanced communities and negative impact on local amenity.

If the Council values resident's opinions and puts communities at the forefront of decision making, it must give residents a voice and a transparent process to ensure that their views are heard.

The adoption of this motion demonstrates to the people of the borough that the council is prepared to act in their interests.

AMENDMENT 1

Councillor Taylor MOVED and Councillor Davis SECONDED the following AMENDMENT 1



Residents are rightly concerned with the number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's) which are currently being introduced across the borough.

We have always believed HMOs are a symptom of the housing crisis and not a solution. In some cases, exploiting some of the most vulnerable people within our community through substandard and unsafe accommodation.

Whilst it is not possible to prevent full planning applications from being submitted, we can act to close the loophole that allows for permitted development rights for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) where between three and six unrelated people share basic amenities, such as a kitchen or bathroom.

Oldham Council currently permits, without the need for planning permission under 'permitted development rights', the change of use of a typical dwelling house occupied by a single household in use class C3, to a property used as a 'small' HMO that is shared by between three and six unrelated people in use class C4.

The Council can, however, adopt an Article 4 Direction to remove these permitted development rights. This will require a planning application to be submitted for change of use from class C3 to C4. This means due process will be applied giving residents a say in what happens in their communities.

We had hoped the government would introduce new legislation to make HMO developers more accountable and give residents a greater say by making it mandatory for small HMO developers to be licensed with the local authority.

In addition, the government has stated it is committed to removing all asylum applicants (approximately thirty thousand) from temporary hotel accommodation. We believe this action will inevitably mean further demand for HMOs.

We acknowledge and accept that the implementation of Article 4 borough wide will have a significant impact on available resources particularly the Planning Department.

This Council resolves to:

1. As soon as possible, Cabinet to consider and make a direction pursuant to Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 on a borough wide basis. Withdrawing the permitted development rights to convert a dwellinghouse (C3) to a House in Multiple Occupation (C4) is appropriate, and justified, to prevent harm to local amenity and promote the wellbeing of the aforementioned areas.

2. To delegate authority to OMBC Planning Department to carry out all necessary consultation and to notify the Secretary of State in accordance with statutory requirements.
3. That, the Borough wide Article 4(1) Direction will come into effect once made.
4. To put existing and prospective HMO landlords on notice that OMBC will look to implement the Article 4(1) Direction on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

Oldham Council does not intend to rely on or hide behind government legislation on this issue.

An Article 4(1) Direction can be used to manage HMO concentration and prevent the formation of imbalanced communities and negative impact on local amenity.

As a resident focused Council, we value residents' opinions and put communities at the forefront of decision making. We are committed to giving residents a voice and a transparent process to ensure that their views are heard.

The adoption of this motion demonstrates to the people of the borough that the council is prepared to act in their interests.

On being put to the vote AMENDMENT 1 was CARRIED.

**AMENDMENT 2:**

Councillor Arnott addressed Council and announced that he was WITHDRAWING AMENDMENT 2 to the MOTION, that was to be seconded by Councillor Adams.

**AMENDMENT 3**

Councillor Sharp MOVED and Councillor Quigg SECONDED AMENDMENT 3

4. This Council will immediately implement a Borough wide Article 4(1) Direction alongside the aforementioned priority areas.

On being put to the vote AMENDMENT 3, was LOST.

On being put to the vote the MOTION, as AMENDED by AMENDMENT 1, was CARRIED unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That, as soon as possible, Cabinet be requested to consider and make a direction pursuant to Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 on a borough wide basis. Withdrawing the permitted development rights to convert a dwellinghouse (C3) to a House in Multiple Occupation (C4) is appropriate, and justified, to prevent harm to local amenity and promote the wellbeing of the aforementioned areas.
2. That authority be delegated to the OMBC Planning Department to carry out all necessary consultation

and to notify the Secretary of State in accordance with statutory requirements.

3. That, the Borough wide Article 4(1) Direction will come into effect once made.
4. That to put existing and prospective HMO landlords on notice that OMBC will look to implement the Article 4(1) Direction on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

Oldham Council does not intend to rely on or hide behind government legislation on this issue.

An Article 4(1) Direction can be used to manage HMO concentration and prevent the formation of imbalanced communities and negative impact on local amenity.

As a resident focused Council, we value residents' opinions and put communities at the forefront of decision making. We are committed to giving residents a voice and a transparent process to ensure that their views are heard.

The adoption of this motion demonstrates to the people of the borough that the council is prepared to act in their interests.

### **Motion 2: Fair Funding Review**

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED the following Motion:

This Council notes the devastating impact of Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition and Conservative Government austerity on Oldham Council and more widely on the people of Oldham. Due to austerity, Oldham Council had to make cuts of over £240m, leading to constant service reorganisation, loss of one third of Council staff and cuts in services for local residents. More widely, lack of investment in social and affordable housing contributed to rising homelessness; Oldham's Magistrate Court closed in 2016, County Court in 2017 followed by the Tax Office and the Department for Work and Pensions Office at Phoenix House in 2022.

### **This Council welcomes**

- a. the steps taken by the Labour Government in the 2025 Spending Review to repair the damage inflicted on the public services we all depend on by delivering Labour's Plan for Change: building strong foundations, kick-starting economic growth, cutting hospital waiting lists, giving children the best start in life, securing control of the country's borders, putting police back on the beat, building 1.5 million new homes, and securing home-grown energy.
- b. The consultation on the Fair Funding Review 2.0 which seeks to simplify and reform central government funding for local councils, recognising the higher demands on local government services in areas like Oldham with high levels of deprivation and where a higher proportion of properties are in lower Council Tax Bands. The Review also proposes a new formula to address councils like Oldham's low Business Rate base and a three-year

settlement which will enable stability in finances and proper planning as opposed to the past 6 years of annual settlements under the Conservative Government.

c. The recognition of the efforts made by Oldham Council to improve service delivery, despite the very real budgetary constraints arising from 14 years of central government funding cuts to 2024, being named the Most Improved Council at the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2025, a prestigious national award that recognises transformation and progress.

**This Council resolves** to respond to the Fair Funding Review consultation supporting:

1. The proposed changes to improve funding for councils like Oldham who have a lower tax base, a lower Business Rates base and a higher level of demand for their services.
2. A three-year funding settlement that will support long term planning
3. A level of funding that will ensure Oldham Council can provide the level of essential services needed by Oldham residents.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

**RESOLVED:**

That this Council resolves to respond to the Fair Funding Review consultation supporting:

1. The proposed changes to improve funding for councils like Oldham who have a lower tax base, a lower Business Rates base and a higher level of demand for their services.
2. A three-year funding settlement that will support long term planning
3. A level of funding that will ensure Oldham Council can provide the level of essential services needed by Oldham residents.

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**NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS**

**Motion 1: Adult Neurodevelopmental Assessment and Support**

Councillor Bishop MOVED and Councillor Harkness SECONDED the following Motion:

**The council notes that:**

There is currently no NHS provision for adults in Oldham who have a neurological condition such as Autism, ADHD or Dyspraxia, to access diagnostic or appropriate therapeutic support. There has been no statutory support offer for neurodivergent adults in Oldham for years, and the result has had severe repercussions for our mental health services, who see many presentations from people who fall into this category and have not been able to cope with their condition without therapeutic support and intervention. It has also meant additional pressure for their carers, parents or families who are

left to pick up the pieces and try to manage as best they can, often with no training or support themselves.



Currently, Northern Care Alliance's (NCA) Paediatric Services provide assessment and diagnosis for children aged 0-18 years, diagnosing and planning the care management for children with neuro-developmental concerns, neuro-disabilities or complex health needs. Once diagnosed, children and young people with neurodevelopmental conditions have historically had an annual appointment with a consultant paediatrician, who assesses their ongoing needs and in turn signposts them to additional therapeutic services where appropriate. However, once they turn 18, they are discharged and there is no transitional support nor an adult equivalent service and those adults who are undiagnosed have no access to an assessment pathway at all.

On the NHS's own website, it states, 'We know that with earlier, well-targeted community support, many admissions and long stays in mental health inpatient units could potentially be avoided.' So, this situation is not just an ethical one, it is also a pragmatic and a fiscally prudent one. With recognition and support, we could reduce the costs associated with mental health burnout, breakdowns and crisis presentations, as well as the number of people experiencing extreme distress.

Autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions are not something which only affect children. In fact, recent research has suggested that as many as 90% of adults who have Autism are undiagnosed. Additionally, according to a study by Willis Towers Watson (WTW), nearly three-quarters (70 per cent) of neurodivergent employees experience mental health issues. Therefore, there is a real impact upon productivity, absence rates and wellbeing in the workforce and avoiding addressing it is only compounding the problem.

Currently, if an adult visits their GP to request an assessment, they are directed towards the Right to Choose option, which invites them to access private provision. The problem with this is that it provides barriers to accessing future NHS support and medication if necessary. In other words, it is not a choice, and many vulnerable people are being failed, and our mental health services and economy are suffering the consequences, as well as those individuals experiencing distress.

**The council further notes that:**

- There is currently no diagnostic or therapeutic support pathway for adults with a neurodevelopmental condition in Oldham.
- The lack of such a service for adults with a neurodevelopmental condition is having a detrimental effect on the individuals themselves, their carers/families, mental health services and the local economy.
- A significant percentage of those people presenting at A&E in mental health crisis are neurodivergent and it is important for many reasons to take proactive steps to reduce this.

**The council resolves to:**

1. Work closely with the local health care authorities to support the expedition of the commissioning of a suitable assessment and therapeutic provision for neurodivergent adults in Oldham.
2. Work closely with local health care authorities to provide a timeframe for actioning the commissioning of this service and to provide a suitable strategy for dealing with the backlog that many years with a lack of this service has resulted in.
3. Commission a report for scrutiny on supporting adults with neurological developmental conditions within the community in the borough of Oldham, with suggested approaches to for further ways to achieve this.

**AMENDMENT**

Councillor Brownridge MOVED and Councillor Rustidge  
SECONDED the following AMENDMENT

**The council notes that:**

Currently the NHS provision for adults in Oldham who have a neurological condition such as Autism, ADHD or Dyspraxia, to access diagnostic or appropriate therapeutic support is provided by Right to Choose. Optimise Health Care is in the process of being contracted to undertake ADHD and autism diagnosis work in Oldham. This is to ensure continuity of support in the borough until NHS Greater Manchester puts a new triage process and pathway for assessment and diagnosis in place across the county.

Currently, Northern Care Alliance's (NCA) Paediatric Services provide assessment and diagnosis for children aged 0-8 years, take referrals up to the age of 8 years old for those with ADHD and/or autism, and Oldham CAMHS, provided by Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust support those over the age of 8. There are pathways in place to support the transition into adulthood, including in relation to medications, and at 18 they would be able to access services via Right to Choose, and going forward, Optimise Healthcare.

On the NHS's own website, it states, 'We know that with earlier, well-targeted community support, many admissions and long stays in mental health inpatient units could potentially be avoided.' So, this situation is not just an ethical one, it is also a pragmatic and a fiscally prudent one. With recognition and support, we could reduce the costs associated with mental health burnout, breakdowns and crisis presentations, as well as the number of people experiencing extreme distress.

Autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions are not something which only affect children. In fact, recent research has suggested that as many as 90% of adults who have Autism are undiagnosed. Additionally, according to a study by Willis Towers Watson (WTW), nearly three-quarters (70 per cent) of neurodivergent employees experience mental health issues.

Therefore, there is a real impact upon productivity, absence rates and wellbeing in the workforce and avoiding addressing it is only compounding the problem.

There has nationally been a rise in demand for ADHD and autism assessments, and as mentioned, NHS Greater Manchester is working on a new model for this as part of re-doing the entire pathway for adults, which is currently being consulted on with the public, and we need to be part of shaping these proposals for our residents so that access to assessments and treatment is timely, and also that the support provided is of a high quality.

**The council resolves to:**

1. To work closely with NHS Greater Manchester on the new pathway and model of services for adults.
2. To ask NHS Greater Manchester, who are the commissioners of these mental health services for our residents, to come to the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board to provide updates and an account. We need assurance that there will be robust provision of these vital health services for adults, and that there will be a safe transition for children and young people into adult services at the appropriate time.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

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

**RESOLVED:**

**The council resolves to:**

1. That the Council works closely with NHS Greater Manchester on the new pathway and model of services for adults.
2. That the Council requests that NHS Greater Manchester, who are the commissioners of these mental health services for our residents, to come to the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board to provide updates and an account. We need assurance that there will be robust provision of these vital health services for adults, and that there will be a safe transition for children and young people into adult services at the appropriate time.

**Motion 2: Investing in Coldhurst: Resurfacing West End Street Pitch and Reclaiming Merton Fields for Open Community Use**

Councillor Wahid MOVED and Councillor Azad SECONDED the following Motion:

**Council Notes:**

- a. **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.

- b. **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.
- c. **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.
- d. **Council's SportsTown Investment and Community Commitments.** The Council has committed £6 million as part of the first phase of a £70 million “SportsTown” regeneration programme, which includes:
  - £5 million from the Community Regeneration Fund to develop a new 3G pitch at Little Wembley, a new stand at Boundary Park, and supporting facilities.
  - £1 million from Oldham Council for a new stitched pitch at Boundary Park and to secure a permanent base for Oldham Rugby League Football Club.
  - Public commitments that SportsTown will benefit community access borough-wide, including increased opportunities for education, health, and sport.
- e. **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. This includes no plans for Merton Fields, which has significant potential to be developed as an open-access, community field.

**Council Believes:**

- That open-access, local sports facilities such as West End Street pitch and Merton Fields should 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.

**Council Resolves to:**

1. Request that officers prepare a report for Cabinet and/or the Communities & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee within six months, which will:
  - a. Assess the current physical condition, legal arrangements, and ownership or lease status of:
    - b. Explore opportunities to consider how existing and future government regeneration funding streams might be aligned with the improvement of community sports assets at ward level.
    - c. Consult relevant community organisations, residents, and funding bodies in developing options.
      - West End Street pitch (Coldhurst).
      - Merton Fields (Hollinwood).
      - Secure investment or external funding to improve access and quality of both sites.
      - Review or renegotiate lease arrangements if aligned with community benefit.
      - Develop open-access use models that prioritise youth, health, and local sport.
2. Ensure that any resulting recommendations are inclusive, transparent, and aimed at increasing the quality and accessibility of recreational spaces in Coldhurst and Hollinwood.

**AMENDMENT**

Councillor Malik MOVED and Councillor Jabbar SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

**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's 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:
  1. 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.
  2. £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.
  3. 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:
  - a. Assess the current physical condition, legal arrangements, and ownership or lease status of: West End Street pitch (Coldhurst)
  - b. 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.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.



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

**RESOLVED:**

**The council resolves to:**

1. 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.
2. Request that officers prepare a report for 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)
  - b. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.

**Motion 3: A revision of the 'Don't Trash Oldham' Policy with regards to Gully Clearing**

Councillor Byrne MOVED and Councillor Lancaster SECONDED the following Motion:

This Motion asks for a revision of the 'Don't Trash Oldham' Policy with regards to Gully Clearing.



This Policy sounded wonderful at the outset of DTO – to have a team in your Ward to not only flush out gullies but to remove detritus in those overgrown and those long forgotten and even tarmacked over.

We are now in our 3<sup>rd</sup> fiscal year and last week my Ward of Saddleworth North has just begun. Alexandra Ward who were first must be suffering by now. In the past 18 months there has been some exceptional rainfall in the whole of the borough and the consequences of not clearing gullies, unless it floods properties, is a false economy.

Water does two things – has a life of its own and flows downhill so damage can be much lower down than the gully. These gullies that feed into culverts need cleaning annually as it used to be.

There are many culverts which are still old Victorian even Georgian ones and when not running clearly present problems and thus expense. During downpours the culverts overflow and can cause considerable damage – often to private property as well as danger to traffic on the roads it flows into.

During these downpours old hillside water courses spring into life and blocked gullies add to this problem endangering property and making road surfaces unsafe and downright dangerous. Oldham and Saddleworth has few flat bits and more hills and our engineers who know water should be listened to.

This policy while achieving at the beginning has now lost its momentum and the damage from consequential flooding- with its cost is no longer working as was intended.

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 Fida	AGAINST
Akhtar Shoab	FOR	Hussain Junaid	AGAINST
Al-Hamdani Sam	FOR	Hussain Sajed	AGAINST
Ali Mohon	AGAINST	Ibrahim Nyla	FOR
Ali Zaheer	FOR	Iqbal Nadeem	AGAINST
Arnott Dave	FOR	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	AGAINST
Aslam Naseem	AGAINST	Jabbar Abdul	AGAINST
Azad Montaz Ali	ABSENT	Kenyon Mark	APOLOGIES
Ball Sandra	FOR	Kouser Aisha	FOR
Bishop Helen	FOR	Lancaster	FOR

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

On a recorded VOTE being taken 27 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION with 26 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 3 ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Director of Environment be requested to carry out a revision of the 'Don't Trash Oldham' Policy with regards to Gully Clearing.

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**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 9<sup>th</sup> April 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 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025, be noted and confirmed.

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**GREATER MANCHESTER JOINT MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN: DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

Councillor Taylor MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive that sought approval to agree to the principle of the making of a joint development plan document with the other nine Greater Manchester councils (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan), to cover planning for minerals and waste across Greater Manchester.

The ten Greater Manchester Council leaders, at the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) Executive Board meeting on 28th March 2025, had agreed to the production of a statutory Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (GMJMWPs).

The submitted report asked Council to consider the necessary steps required in relation to seeking approval from all the Greater Manchester districts to commence preparation and to delegate its preparation to the AGMA Executive Board.

The existing Greater Manchester Minerals and Waste Plans required to be updated in full because they were out of date having been adopted over ten years ago. Their replacement with a single, joint minerals and waste plan would ensure efficient compliance with national planning policy.

1. That Council agrees to the principle of the making of a joint development plan document with the other nine Greater Manchester councils (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan), to cover planning for minerals and waste across Greater Manchester.
2. That Council notes that the Cabinet will be asked to agree to a recommendation, to delegate the formulating and preparing of the draft joint development plan document to the AGMA Executive Board.
3. That it is noted that there will be further reports to future meetings of the Council in respect of, matters, which are within the remit of the Council including adoption of the joint development plan document.

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## UPDATE ON APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Interim Executive Director of Resources, which asked Members to consider changes in relation to appointments to Committees for 2025/2026, which were detailed at Appendix 1 of the submitted report.

The report advised Members that since the annual meeting of the Council, several changes had been proposed to appointments to Committees. These appointments did not affect the Council's overall political balance.

## RESOLVED:

1. That the changes to the appointments to Committees, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, for the 2025/26 Municipal Year, be agreed.

- That the Chief Executive be granted delegated authority to make any in-year changes to appointments, where notified.

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## UPDATE TO PAY POLICY STATEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK



Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Jabbar SECONDED a report of the Chief Executive, which advised members that the Council's corporate plan 'Ready for the Future' had established ambitions to drive change by focusing on three missions: healthier, happier places; great place to live; and green and growing. To turn the ambitions into reality, the Council needed to have appropriate organisational leaderships arrangements in place for it to deliver against the ambitions set out in the plan, but to also continue to deliver statutory services and priorities.

The Council's Appointments Committee had met and considered revisions to the Council's senior management team structure and the submitted report detailed recommendations from that Committee for Full Council's consideration.

To ensure that the right organisational leadership arrangements were in place, in May 2025, the Council's Appointments Committee met to consider changes to the Council's senior management team structure. The structure proposed changes to some roles and to move to a senior management structure of four executive director roles comprising:

- Executive Director of Place (Deputy Chief Executive).
- Executive Director of Resources.
- Executive Director of Health and Social Care (Deputy Chief Executive).
- Executive Director of Children and Young People.

The Appointments Committee agreed to this structure and to commence recruitment to the vacant role of Executive Director of Resources role; together with recruitment to a number of other senior management team roles, some of which have interim arrangements in place.

In line with the Council's Pay Policy Statement, Council is required to consider the case for any salary in excess of £100,000, prior to any appointment to the chief officer posts that it relates. The salary package will be defined as basic salary, any performance related pay, fees, routinely payable allowances and benefits in kind, that are due under the contract. The roles of Director referred to in the submitted report were graded at Director level and would be appointed on a spot salary between £104,337 to £115,105 and the roles of Executive Director have been graded at Executive Director level and the vacant role would be appointed on a spot salary of £144,160. The Appointments Committee approved a market supplement of up to £10,000 for the roles of Director of Growth and Director of Digital in light of a benchmarking exercise to attract the right candidates for the roles.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Council notes the decision of the Appointments Committee to move to a senior management structure of four executive directors.
2. That Council notes that the Appointments Committee have redesignated the vacant role of Assistant Chief Executive to Executive Director of Resources.
3. That Council notes that the Appointments Committee have approved the redesignation of the Director of Economy to the Director of Growth and approved the recruitment to this post, and should it be required, to apply a market supplement of up to £10,000.
4. That Council notes that the Appointments Committee have renamed the Strategic Director of Children's Services to the Executive Director of Children and Young People.
5. That Council notes that the Appointments Committee have approved the renaming of the Director of Technology to the Director of Digital, and should it be required, to apply a market supplement of up to £10,000.
6. That Council notes that the Appointments Committee have agreed to the recruitment to the role of Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help.
7. That Council approves the designation of the Director of Finance as the Council's Chief Finance Officer for the purposes of s114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and shall fulfil all the statutory duties of that post and in accordance with S151 of the Local Government Act 1972 shall be the officer with responsibilities for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, and the Constitution be updated where required.
8. That Council approves the designation of the Director of Legal as the Council's Monitoring Officer/Borough Solicitor for the purposes of Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and the Constitution be updated where required.
9. That Council notes that the Appointments Committee have redesignated the Deputy Place Lead and Deputy Chief Executive Health and Care Integration to the Executive Director of Health and Care (Deputy Chief Executive), with responsibilities including public health, adult social care and retaining the Deputy Place Lead role for the Integrated Care Board, and that this post will transfer to the Council's terms and conditions.
10. That Council considers the case for any salary in excess of £100,000, prior to any appointment to the chief officer posts, and, in this regard, approves the roles of Executive Director of Resources, Executive Director of Health and Care (Deputy Chief Executive), Director of Growth, Director of Digital, Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help, Director of Finance and Director of Legal.
11. That Council agrees to update the Pay Policy Statement to reflect these changes.
12. That Council agrees to update the Constitution to reflect the changes outlined above.

**MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2025/2026**

The Mayor advised that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda and would be considered at a future meeting.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 9.20pm



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