

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Peter Dean, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure.

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities.

Events:

- During half term, a series of family friendly activities took place including Halloween Town centre Trail, Halloween Half Marathon and a new fire themed bonfire night celebration. The new event was a huge success with interactive monster lab installations which the Leader and the Mayor took part in and an amazing firework display. Positive feedback from
- The Christmas Lights switch on is planned for Sat 15th November, with music, dance, Father Christmas and Bluey and Bingo from the hit TV show also making an appearance.

Gallery Oldham and Libraries

- Gallery Oldham's much-loved Old Library and Art Gallery building officially reopened on Sat 25th Oct, with stunning new permanent displays celebrating Oldham's history, people and art.
- New exhibition launched, 27th Sept 2025 – 3rd Jan 2026, 'Indian Perspectives' by artists Tony Phillips and Jasmir Creed. The exhibition examines the legacies of British colonial rule of India and the experiences of the people of Indian heritage living in Britain, it features more than 100 drawings and paintings.
- Our Beautiful Oldham project is developing a new nature gallery at Gallery Oldham with Early Years families. So far, we have recruited an Early Years steering group, Hive Mind, who are helping us to co-curate this space. Overall, we have engaged 278 participants with the project so far. Our next event is Toddler Takeover Day, part of Kids in Museums, on Sat 22 November. The new gallery will open in June 2026.
- The newly refurbished library layout at Oldham Library now allows for more flexible spaces to accommodate large scale programming and events, some of which are highlighted below:
- Action Together Volunteering Fair - over 30 organisations were represented from local community gardens to larger organisations like St John's Ambulance
- Healthwatch Oldham - Women's Health Forum. 400 people attended Healthwatch Oldham's marketplace event at Oldham Library, focusing on women's health and wellbeing. The day included health checks, over 20 stalls from health and wellbeing services in Oldham, and two health talks on Breast Screening and Bowel Cancer awareness.
- Menopause Awareness Month. Throughout October we held a range of talks, drop ins, cafes and webinars around menopause and to raise awareness of signs, symptoms and the support available to women in Oldham.

Archives:

- Oldham Archives moved into their new home in Spindles, with a successful open day held on Saturday 27th September. The repository now houses all the archives collections including the Oldham Chronicle archive.
- The Archives also successfully delivered the Oldham Histories Festival, a packed programme with walks, talks and behind-the-scenes tours of the new Oldham Archives. For ticketed events, 198 tickets were booked with several new partners involved in this year's Oldham Histories Festival.

Oldham Theatre Workshop

- Oldham Theatre Workshop moved into their new home in JR Clynes Building, delivering creative sessions for over 600 young people per week.
- The team are working on their new Christmas show Hansel and Gretel at Oldham Library Theatre Space, 4-24 Dec 2025. Tickets are on sale now.

Creativity and Culture

- Dancing Diyas, part of The Indian Association Oldham, and Saddleworth Women's Morris & Clog performed at La Merce, Barcelona's largest annual street festival in September.

Oldham Active – Joint working around Facilities

- I'm pleased to share an exciting example of partnership working between Oldham Active and the Pinnacle Trust who are working together to manage the newly expanded and refurbished 3G pitch at The Hathershaw College when the development is complete later this year. This will maximise the use of the facility for the whole community.
- By working jointly, we're making sure these fantastic spaces are open and accessible—not just for students, but for residents of all ages. It's a great step forward in making the most of what we have, and in supporting healthier, more active lives across the borough

Radclyffe Lights – Progress update

- The running track at Radclyffe Athletic Centre is a much-valued asset in Oldham, supporting local clubs, schools, and community groups, and playing a key role in encouraging active lifestyles and sporting achievement across the borough. We have been working collaboratively to update the lighting systems for the outdoor running track. Initial assessments and options appraisals for the outdoor lights at the Centre are now complete.
- Electrical enabling works have begun, starting with disconnecting faulty fittings and checking if any lights can be safely switched on temporarily. This work will fix electrical faults and upgrade the infrastructure to support new and refurbished lighting. Once complete—expected within 2 to 3 weeks—the main works will begin, including new light fittings and a modern control system.
- The upgraded lighting will meet Class II standards, suitable for regional and club-level competitions, while also improving energy efficiency and the experience for users and spectators. Oldham Active is working closely with Oldham & Royton Harriers to ensure alternative training options are available during the works.

Active Travel – Bikeability

- The Chadderton Activation Scheme delivered a wide range of engagement, training, and infrastructure improvements to promote active travel and wellbeing, engaging over 900 people directly through education sites and community groups, and reaching a further 7,500 more people in Oldham through wider communications. With a budget of £75,000, the programme invested in walking and cycling sessions, training, events, signage, equipment and school resources. Infrastructure improvements created safer, well-lit routes linking key areas like Becker Way to Freehold Metrolink Station via safe crossings. The activation programme delivered a diverse range of initiatives, including Nordic walking sessions, Dr Bike repairs, Scavenger hunts, theatre-based education, heritage walks, wayfinding installations, and communal cycling equipment. Alongside this, Oldham's Bikeability programme reached over 1,600 young people this year, including 734 balance bike participants—well above the target of 165. New tech-integrated sessions in high schools and monthly training calendars are being developed, helping young people build confidence, road safety skills, and independence.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.