

**Present:** Councillor Shah (in the Chair)  
Councillors M Ali, Brownridge, Dean, Goodwin, F Hussain,  
Jabbar, Mushtaq and Taylor

**1            APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received.

**2            URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair informed the meeting that agenda item 8 (Contractual Arrangements - Azure Cloud Contract – Microsoft) had been withdrawn and would now be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

The Chair advised that there was one item of urgent business (Request for a Direct Award of the Domestic Property Disability Adaption Framework for the Provision of Level Access Showers and Shower over Baths), which would be considered at item 12. The grounds for urgency being that a formal decision to renew the contract for the provision of Level Access Showers and Shower over Baths, referred to in the submitted report, was required prior to the next scheduled Cabinet meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

**3            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mushtaq declared an 'other registerable interest' in agenda item 10 - Extension of Short Breaks Play and Leisure Activities from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026. Councillor Mushtaq left the room during the consideration and determination of this agenda item.

**4            PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions for this meeting of the Cabinet to consider.

**5            MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025 be approved, as a correct record.

**6            REVENUE MONITOR AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT  
PROGRAMME 2025/26 QUARTER 2**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance which provided Members with an update, as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 (Quarter 2 – July-September) of the Council's 2025/26 forecast revenue budget position, the financial forecast of the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Housing Revenue Account (detailed at Annex 1, to the report) alongside the financial position of the capital programme together with the revised capital programme 2025/26 to 2029/30 (detailed at Annex 2, to the report).

The forecast adverse position for 2025/26, at the end of Quarter 2 was estimated to be £21.094m (£23.209m at the end of Month 5). The details within the revenue monitoring report for Quarter 2 followed on from the Month 5 report previously presented to the Cabinet and highlighted any significant areas of concern which may not just impact on the current year, but also when preparing future budgets. A forecast adverse position based on the Quarter 2 revenue controllable budget was £21.094m which represented a favourable movement of £2.115m from the position previously reported. The increasing need for support of the Council's services from residents and businesses, the complexity of the support needed, and inflationary costs continues to put pressure on service budgets and was demonstrated by the forecast outturn position reported at the end of Quarter 2. These pressures, in the main driven by escalating costs in essential statutory services supporting the most vulnerable residents, reflected the broader challenges the Council and numerous Councils across the country are facing. This is particularly acute in statutory and heavily inspected services where there is little flexibility to mitigate rising costs, for example increasing pressures on social care budgets due to the support needs of vulnerable children and complexity in the needs of adult requiring support.

There was also an increasing need to support children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) and whilst significant work has been done in the last 12 months, homelessness presentations and use of temporary accommodation is still of concern given the numbers accessing this service. Since the last report was presented to this meeting, the implementation of the agreed enhanced controls had started to have an impact on the forecast position resulting in the favourable movement between periods. As these controls are further embedded it was expected that the position would continue to improve.

It was important that the organisation continues its work on mitigating and reducing the forecast revenue variance by the end of the financial year, limiting any unbudgeted use of reserves and protecting its financial resilience. Given, the in-year financial position of the Council, the level of reserves available and the budgetary gaps already within the MTFS, the upcoming Policy Statement and the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27 onwards will have a significant influence on the financial sustainability of the Council and the Council's ability to set a balanced budget over the short term.

The budget pressures the Council has faced in recent years cannot continue to be mitigated without significant action both to reduce projected spend in-year and to reduce costs over the years to come. Further details of mitigations underway were included at Annex 1, to the submitted report.

Information on the forecast year end position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) were also outlined in the report.

The report outlines the most up to date capital spending position for 2025/26 to 2029/30 for approved schemes. The revised Capital Programme budget for 2025/26 was £122.248m at the close of Quarter 2 (30<sup>th</sup> September 2025). Actual expenditure to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 was £25.973m (21.2% of the forecast outturn).

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 – to agree the recommendations in the report.

Option 2 – to not agree the recommendations in the report.

Option 1 was the preferred Option.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet notes the report.
2. That the Cabinet notes the forecast revenue position at the end of Quarter 2 (2025/26), at £21.094m, with mitigations in place to reduce expenditure as detailed at Annex 1, to the submitted report.
3. That the Cabinet notes the forecast positions for the Dedicated Schools Grant and Housing Revenue Account.
4. That the Cabinet approves the revised Capital Programme for 2025/26 including the proposed virements and notes the forecast for the financial years to 2029/30 as at the end of Quarter 2 as outlined in Annex 2, to the submitted report.

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## **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2026/2027**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Resources, the purpose of which was to present the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2026/27. Cabinet, in considering the report noted that it was being presented to the Council's meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

The Council was required to review its Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme each year and decide whether to revise it or leave it unchanged.

A major consultation exercise had not been undertaken regarding changes to the CTR scheme and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority has been provisionally advised that no change to the current scheme was being proposed. In this regard, the proposal was that the CTR scheme for 2026/27 remain the same as that operating in 2025/26 and, therefore, no consultation exercise is required. The current CTR scheme provides a maximum reduction equivalent to 85% of the Council Tax charge for a Band A property and this has been unchanged since 2014/15.

The scheme continued to meet the needs of residents and remained in line with national regulations.

It was noted that caseload had continued to gradually decrease, and there have been no national or legislative changes that would require any local amendment.

During 2026/27, officers would scope potential options for 2027/28 to assess whether any amendments to the scheme would provide value for money. This will include consideration of the cost of system changes, any potential administrative savings, and the ongoing need to ensure the scheme continues to support residents effectively.

Options/Alternatives considered:

The Council is required to review its Council Tax Reduction scheme each year and determine whether any changes are needed. The review for 2026/27 found no operational, legislative or financial factors requiring amendment. Given the time required to design and consult on changes, it would not have been possible to implement any amendments for 2026/27. A full review was to be undertaken during 2026/27 to inform the 2027/28 scheme

Therefore, the preferred option was that the that Council, on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025, approves that the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme remains unchanged for 2026/27.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet recommend that the Council approves that the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme remains unchanged for 2026/27.

8      **CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS - AZURE CLOUD  
CONTRACT - MICROSOFT**

The Chair advised that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda and would be considered by the Cabinet, at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

9      **SPRING BROOK CAPITAL WORKS**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services that sought approval for a capital project that will offer additional places and enhance provision for pupils with additional needs who are based within the Newbridge Trust. It also sought approval for the allocation of funding from HNPCA and Basic Need Grant towards the scheme.

The submitted report related to a project at Spring Brook Upper School that will enhance existing provision and provide additional provision for pupils with additional needs. These proposals are now developed sufficiently for costs and proposals to be placed before the Cabinet for a final decision. This project will create a total of 36 new places in the school for children with additional needs.

Currently the Local Authority has around £2.8million of Basic Need funding and £9.6million of High Needs Capital Allocation Funding. It was proposed that where projects will generate additional places these projects will be funded from the HNPCA Grant provision

Spring Brook Upper School is a special school that serves all areas Oldham for children with SEMH and is run by New Bridge

Multi Academy Trust. This project will increase access to places for 36 children



Spring Brook Academy is a special school in Oldham that is based across two sites and currently caters for 114 pupils aged between 4-16 years old with a range of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties. Spring Brook lower school, which accommodates KS1 & KS2 pupils, shares its site with Lyndhurst Primary School, a mainstream primary academy. The Spring Brook upper school site, which accommodates KS3 pupils, is based in the Failsworth area of Oldham. Spring Brook lower school is approximately a 10-minute drive from the upper school site.

The central project objective for the Trust is how best to bring Spring Brook's lower and upper school pupils together on one site. The lower school and upper school pupils are to be predominantly based and taught in separate areas. The lower school pupils are to be accommodated within a new teaching block with the upper school pupils continuing to be taught within the existing main school building. KS1 pupils will be taught on the ground floor of the new teaching block with KS2 pupils taught on the first floor. Classrooms are to be designed to accommodate a maximum group size of between 8-10 pupils

The total cost of this project is estimated to be in the region of £1,581,199 (a total of £1,739,319 when including 10% contingency) following completion of a RIBA stage 2 report by Spring Brook Academy. It is proposed that this project is funded by the LA Basic Need and/or HNPCA Grant.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: To approve the above capital investment for the project listed above to deliver the ambitions of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027.

Option 2: Do not approve the projects and risk not fulfilling the above strategy.

Option 1 was the preferred Option.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet approves the Capital Project, detailed in the submitted report that will offer additional places and enhance provision for pupils with additional needs who are based within the Newbridge Trust.
2. That the Cabinet approves the allocation of funding from HNPCA and Basic Need Grant towards the scheme, as detailed in the submitted report.

## **EXTENSION OF SHORT BREAKS PLAY AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES FROM 1ST APRIL 2026**

The Cabinet received a report of the Executive Director of Children and Young People which sought approval to exercise the option to extend the current contract with POINT. The service is a statutory requirement ensuring that children, young people and families have access to Short Breaks Play and Leisure activities.

The existing contract (DN647420) is due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 but includes an existing option for a two-year extension. Approval is sought to exercise this option for two years to maintain compliance with statutory and funding obligations.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: to exercise the option to extend the initial term of POINT Short Break Play and Leisure Activities Contract for a period of two years at £200,000.00 per year, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 up until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028 in order to allow services for Oldham's children, young people and families to continue. This will prevent any gaps in service delivery for children and young people with additional needs and their families and ensure statutory obligations are being met by the Council.

Option 2: do not exercise the option to extend the contract with POINT.

Option 1: is the preferred Option.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet exercises the option to extend the initial term of POINT Short Break Play and Leisure Activities Contract for a period of two years at £200,000.00 per year, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 up until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028, in order to allow services for Oldham's children, young people and families to continue; thereby preventing any gaps in service delivery for children and young people with additional needs and their families and to ensure that statutory obligations are being met by the Council.

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#### **CHANGE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME DELIVERY - EARLY LANGUAGE SUPPORT FOR EVERY CHILD/ALTERNATIVE PROVISION SPECIALIST TASKFORCE: GRANT REQUIREMENTS**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Children and Young People, that sought approval to appoint/extend posts relating to grant funding allocated to Oldham in relation to the Change Partnership Programme (CPP) and associated ELSEC (Early Language Support for every child) and the APST (Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce). The funding for this was ringfenced and could only be used for the purposes set out in the submitted report.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: Approve progression of the staffing model outlined in appendix A so that the CPP can be implemented in full. The CPP funding is ring-fenced for the projects identified in this paper. Therefore, there is no other viable option. Carrying out the projects will provide the local area with much needed early identification and specialist support for our most vulnerable children and young people.

Option 2: Do nothing. If we take no action, funding will not be utilised and may, as a result, need to be returned to the DfE, which would significantly limit the support available to identify needs and support our most disadvantaged children and young people.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet approves implementation of Option 1, as detailed in the submitted report, to draw on the CPP grant funding to enable creation of the required posts and dependencies to work alongside the SEND Team and wider SEND and Inclusion Service.

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## **REQUEST FOR A DIRECT AWARD OF THE DOMESTIC PROPERTY DISABILITY ADAPTION FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROVISION OF LEVEL ACCESS SHOWERS AND SHOWER OVER BATHS**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) which advised that the Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA) Framework, which provided essential works such as Level Access Showers and Shower over Baths through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), had exceeded its approved contract value and cannot be extended within the limits set by the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. It was therefore proposed to end the framework following its current one-year extension, seek an exemption to regularise spend via a direct award, and secure continuity of service beyond November 2025.

The Council had a multi contractor Framework Agreement in place for Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA), which commenced on 1 December 2022 for an initial term of 2 years with the option to extend twice, each for an additional term of no more than 1 year. Under the Framework Agreement, the Council places orders for the provision of Level Access Showers and Shower over Baths, as and when required. The Framework Agreements were put in place to enable the Council to meet its duty to award a Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) to those who are eligible and to ensure the works funded by a DFG are completed to a high standard and in a timely manner.

The initial 2-year term of the Framework Agreement, which the Council has entered with each of the 4 appointed contractors, expired on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024. An extension was granted for 1 year and is due to expire on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025, as outline in Appendix A. The Framework Agreement provides that 28 days' written notice is required to be served on the Contractor to extend the initial term.

The cost of the extended term is not within the capped total life of contract costs set at £2,260,000, as approved in the original Cabinet report for the procurement of DPDA works requirements and as provided for in the advertised opportunity. The spend to date is £3,089,518.45, which exceeds both the original approval and the maximum permitted modification under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs).

Under the CPRs, a modification of up to 15% (in this case, £339,000) would have been permissible, resulting in a total of £2,599,000. As the actual spend has already exceeded this figure, an exemption to the CPRs is required. This report therefore seeks approval to end the Framework Agreements

and to formally request an exemption for a direct award to regularise the position and enable continued delivery of this essential service.



The DFG budget for this year is £3,044,703.82. The spend to date from the DFG budget is £1,034,003.19 which leaves an outstanding budget of £2,010,700.63. Projected spend to the end of the framework will also need to be calculated to ensure it remains within the wider thresholds.

The report also sought approval to increase the framework prices by 5% from April 2025 to November 2025. And to ensure the uplift in the direct award for December 2025 to November 2026.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: Do nothing and allow the Framework Agreements to come to an end on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025. This option was not recommended due to the legal, operational, and reputational risks it presented to the Council.

Option 2: To extend each Framework Agreement for 12 months, subject to contractor agreement, and seek an exemption to the CPRs. This option is not recommended due to the legal, operational, and reputational risks it presents to the Council.

Option 3: To extend each Framework Agreement for 7 months, seek an exemption to the CPRs, and approve a 5% uplift from April 2025. This option is not recommended due to the legal, operational, and reputational risks it presents to the Council.

Option 4: To end the current Framework Agreements on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025 and request an exemption from the CPRs in order to approve a direct award to the current four providers under a one-year Framework Agreement, running from December 2025 to November 2026. In addition, to approve a 5% uplift to the current contract rates from April 2025 to November 2025 and for the extended period until November 2026. Under this option, the current agreements would end on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025. We would seek an exemption to the CPRs, as the spend to date plus the projected spend to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025 will exceed the permitted modification threshold. The proposal is to make a direct award to the current four framework providers on a one-year term (to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2026) to ensure continuity of service, in line with the original arrangement. This approach would provide sufficient time to undertake a new procurement. In addition, a 5% uplift to contract prices would be applied from April 2025, reflecting rising costs. This would support providers to remain financially sustainable, encourage their continued engagement, and help secure their participation in both the current and future procurement exercises.

Option 4 was the preferred Option.

In considering the report Cabinet noted that the Chair of Adults and Social Care Scrutiny Board had exempted this item from call-in, by virtue of Rule 14 of the Council's Constitution, due to the need to make a decision regarding the future operation of the service, prior to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

Resolved:

1. That Option 4, detailed in the submitted report be approved.
2. The Cabinet notes that under Option 4 allows for the end of the current Framework Agreements on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025 and authorises an exemption from the CPRs in order to approve a direct award to the current four providers under a one-year Framework Agreement, running from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2026.
3. The Cabinet notes that in addition, to approve a 5% uplift to the current contract rates backdated from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to November 2025 and for the extended 12 months contract value.
4. The Cabinet notes that under Option 4, the current agreements will end on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025, therefore an exemption to the CPRs, as the spend to date plus the projected spend to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025, is approved.
5. The Cabinet notes that proposal is to make a direct award to the current four framework providers on a one-year term (to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2026) to ensure continuity of service, is in line with the original arrangement - this approach would provide sufficient time to undertake a new procurement exercise; in addition, a 5% uplift to contract prices would be applied from April 2025, reflecting rising costs. This will support providers to remain financially sustainable, to encourage their continued engagement, and help secure their participation in both the current and future procurement exercises.
6. That the Cabinet notes the actions of the Chair of the Adults and Social Care Scrutiny Board in exempting this report from the Call-in process, under Rule 14 of the Council's Constitution.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 6.25pm.