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CABINET

23/02/2026 at 6.00 pm



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

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dean.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The following question was submitted by Mr. Syed Maruf Ali:
How does Oldham Council ensure adult social care is culturally and religiously sensitive for Muslim residents from South Asian communities? Specifically, how are needs such as gender-appropriate personal care, halal food, language support, and respect for religious practice assessed, delivered, and monitored by commissioned providers? What steps does the Council take when care fails to meet these standards, and what evidence assures compliance with statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and Equality Act 2010?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing replied, as follows:

Oldham Council is committed to delivering culturally and religiously sensitive adult social care in full compliance with the Care Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010. At assessment stage, care planning identifies and records each person's individual needs, preferences, and protected characteristics. This includes gender-appropriate personal care, halal dietary requirements, language support, and support for religious observance such as daily prayers, Ramadan fasting and Eid celebrations. These requirements are embedded within the individual's care and support plan and form part of the commissioned service expectations.

During procurement, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is completed, and providers are required to demonstrate how they will meet the diverse cultural and religious needs of Oldham's communities, providing assurance at the point of contract award. Ongoing assurance is secured through structured contract monitoring and visits by Contract and Quality Monitoring Officers. Providers must evidence how culturally specific needs are being delivered in practice, for example by sourcing certified halal food and storing it appropriately; arranging access to an Imam if requested; facilitating attendance at mosque; providing prayer mats and washing facilities; respecting modesty and gender preferences in personal care; and arranging Urdu or

Bengali interpreters where required. Contract monitoring forms specifically require providers to state how culturally diverse needs are identified and met.

Where standards are not met, the Council takes prompt and proportionate action. This includes performance improvement plans, enhanced monitoring and clear corrective actions within agreed timescales, alongside additional cultural awareness, or dietary compliance training where necessary. In one case, where a care home initially expressed concern about meeting halal requirements, the Council intervened to provide guidance and require training to ensure lawful and respectful provision. Continued oversight through monitoring visits and multi-disciplinary reviews ensured compliance.

Through personalised assessment, clear contractual requirements, active monitoring, and decisive intervention where required, the Council assures itself that commissioned providers uphold residents' cultural identity, religious practice and equality rights in line with statutory duties.

5 **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th January 2026, be approved as a correct record.

6 **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD HELD 28TH JANUARY 2026**

The Cabinet considered the draft minutes of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board held on 28th January 2026.

It was reported that the Scrutiny Board had recommended to Cabinet and to the Council that all the budget reduction proposals considered, be approved.

Resolved:

That the deliberations and comments of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, held 28th January 2026, be noted and endorsed.

7 **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD HELD 5TH FEBRUARY 2026**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Opposition budget proposals for 2026/27, that were presented to the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board's meeting on 5th February 2026. The Scrutiny Board had recommended that the Cabinet consider the proposals submitted by the Liberal Democrat Group, which were the only Opposition Group proposals presented to the meeting.

The Cabinet considered the proposals and summarised information in relation to the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals for the 2026/27 budget.

Resolved:

1. That the deliberations and comments of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, held 5th February 2026 be noted.
2. That, after consideration, none of the alternative budget proposals presented by the Liberal Democrats Group be accepted.

8

REVENUE MONITOR AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2025/26: QUARTER 3 DECEMBER 2025

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance that provided Members with an update as at 31st December 2025 (end of Quarter 3 – 2025/26) 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), alongside the financial position of the capital programme together with the revised capital programme 2025/26 to 2029/30 (detailed at Annex 2).

In terms of the Council's Revenue Position, the forecast adverse position for 2025/26 at the end of Quarter 3 was estimated to be £15.199m (£21.094m at the end of Quarter 2 – 30th September 2025). The details within the revenue monitoring report for Quarter 3 followed on from the Quarter 2 report previously presented and highlights 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 3 revenue controllable budget is £15.199m which is a favourable movement of £5.894m from the position previously reported.

The Council was exploring opportunities in conjunction with its external treasury advisors to look at our current policy on capitalising interest costs for assets under construction. This could generate a potential revenue adjustment to the Council which would reduce the forecast adverse variance for 2025/26. The outcome of this work would be reported to Cabinet, within the Month 10 revenue monitoring report, on 23rd March 2026.

Since the last report was presented to this meeting, the implementation of the agreed enhanced controls has continued to have an impact on the forecast position resulting in the favourable movement between periods. It was expected that the position would continue to improve as these agreed controls are embedded further. It was important that the organisation continues this 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 reported within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the recent publication of the Local Government Finance Settlement has provided some additional support to the Council as a result of

the Fair Funding Review and the continuation of the Recovery Grant for another 3 years. Whilst the funding was welcomed, the Council must deliver within the financial resources allocated for 2026/27 onwards. The Council's strategy to transfer much needed resources to reserves to increase reserves was a positive movement in ensuring the organisations financial resilience over the medium term.

Further details of the current estimated position were included at Annex 1, to the 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.

In terms of the Council's Capital Position, the report outlined 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 £70.200m at the close of Quarter 3, incorporated the changes made from the annual review of the programme. The actual expenditure to 31st December 2025 was £40.189m (57.25% of the forecast outturn).

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option One (preferred Option) – to agree the recommendations detailed in the report.

Option 2 - to not agree the recommendations and propose alternative forecasts.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet:

1. Notes the report.
2. Notes the forecast revenue position at the end of Quarter 3 (31st December 2025) at £15.199m with further mitigations in place to reduce expenditure as detailed at Annex 1, to the report.
3. Approves the potential redundancy costs in respect of the Environmental Services Redesign.
4. Notes the projected use of general revenue usable reserves during 2025/26.
5. Notes the forecast positions for the Dedicated Schools Grant and Housing Revenue Account.
6. 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 3 as outlined in Annex 2, to the report.

REVENUE BUDGET 2026/27 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2027/28 TO 2028/29

The Cabinet received a report of the Director of Finance that provided Members with the budget reduction requirement and the Administration's budget proposals for 2026/27, having regard to the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (PLGFS) published on 17th December 2025 and the subsequent Final Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) published on 9 February 2026. The report also presents the financial forecasts for the remainder of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period 2028/27 to 2028/29 based on the

Settlement information received from Central Government and provided an indicative narrative on the years 2029/30 and 2030/31 which are outside the LGFS period.



The submitted report presented the Council's Revenue Budget for 2026/27 together with the budget reduction requirement and the Administration's budget proposals for 2026/27 including Council Tax intentions. It also provided the financial forecasts for the MTFS period, 2027/28 to 2028/29 on the known settlement information and a high-level indicative narrative for the years 2029/30 and 2030/31 which were outside the LGFS period. Included within this report were several budget reduction proposals for consideration and a budgeted transfer to reserves for the financial years 2026/27 to 2028/29 which is the second consecutive that the Council's revenue budget has been balanced without the need to use general revenue reserves to support it.

The Council has reviewed all the underlying assumptions in its approach to setting the revenue budget for 2026/27 onwards having regard for the impact of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 and the allocations published in the Local Government Finance Settlement. The revenue budget gap for 2026/27 is therefore revised to £20.301m. To balance the budget, a resources review has enabled budget adjustments of £10.196m, with Transformation Programme savings of £2.000m to be applied. £8.105m of budget reductions are proposed for delivery in 2026/27 which would balance the revenue budget position.

A version of the Revenue Budget 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2027/28 to 2028/29 (based on the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (PLGFS) received on 17th December 2025) was presented to the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board on 28th January 2026. The Board scrutinised the report and the other reports on the agenda that formed a core part of the Council's strategic financial planning framework and recommended them all to Cabinet. A further meeting of the Scrutiny Board took place on 5th February 2026, which considered budget proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrat Party. The Board recommended these proposals to Cabinet (minute 7, above, refers).

The report explained that each year, the Council identified what it needs to spend on Council services for the following year as part of the budget setting process. This process also involved the identification of provisional spending plans for future financial years. This ensured that the Council's future spending plans were balanced against the funding forecasts for Government Grants, Council Tax and Business Rates revenues and aligned with the Council's corporate plan. These plans formed part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which sets out a financial forecast for the period 2026/27 to 2028/29. The first part of this report focused on the first year of the MTFS period and at Section 16 sets out a forecast for the final two years, 2027/28 to 2028/29 of the

settlement period with and indicative budget position for the years 2029/30 and 2030/31 which were outside the current settlement period.



The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement and associated funding announcements were received on 17th December 2025, with the Final Local Government Finance Settlement being received on 9th February 2026. This was the first multi-year settlement since 2016/17 and provided actual allocations for 2026/27 and indicative allocations for the two years 2027/28 and 2028/29. Forecasts for 2026/27 were updated using actual funding information (where available) and the 2027/28 to 2028/29 estimates had been revised using information in the LGFS and the Policy Statement. These revised estimates were presented in the submitted report.

In addition to the cost pressures that were anticipated when the initial estimates for 2026/27 and future years were prepared, for the ensuing financial year and had seen further financial challenges. The challenges included:

- a. Continued increase in costs and the number of placements within Children's Services.
- b. Continued increase in costs and demand for Adult Social Care services.
- c. Increased costs of maintaining the Council's property portfolio.

The report added that when the initial 2026/27 MTFS was prepared, the forward estimates took account of the ongoing demand pressures detailed above but, as has been reported widely throughout the financial year, demand from and complexity of care required for the Borough's residents particularly in the area of social care services had continued to place significant additional pressures on the budget in 2025/26 and subsequently beyond. In year mitigations had been implemented throughout the financial year to address the financial pressures which have had a positive impact on the revenue forecast outturn yet, as detailed in the Quarter 3 budget monitoring report (minute 8, above refers), the forecast position was still expected to end with an adverse revenue position at the end of the financial year. Any in-year overspend would impact on the level of reserves available to support the budget on an ongoing basis and the reserves available by 2026/27 were outlined in Section 13, of the submitted report.

At the same time as considering the financial challenges facing the Council, it was also important to consider the Council's commitment to the co-operative way of working. Based on a set of values and the principle of enabling and motivating everyone to "do their bit", this influenced the policy direction of the Council and its response to the various financial challenges.

As an organisation, a co-operative approach provided the opportunity to find positive and sustainable solutions to the ongoing financial challenges being faced. Oldham had a values driven approach which underpinned the way that it did business.

The Council believed in the importance of fairness and responsibility. In practice, that meant maximising the positive social, economic and environmental impact that can be achieved through everything that the Council does, as set out in the Council's values.



In terms of consultation, it was reported that members of the public and stakeholders had been consulted on the proposals detailed in the report and associated appendices and invited to submit feedback. A proactive approach to communications was taken, with a multi-channel communications strategy incorporating digital, social and traditional media, ensuring that residents and businesses across Oldham were aware of the Council's 2026/27 budget proposals and were able to have their say. An update of the consultation responses was included at Appendix 11, to the report.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 – that the Cabinet accepts the 2026/27 Council Tax and ASCP increases as set out at Appendix 10, of the submitted report and the budget assumptions and resulting financial forecasts presented within the report.

Option 2 – that the Cabinet proposes amendments to the assumptions which would change the resulting financial forecasts and budget reduction requirement.

Option 3 – that the Cabinet approves and commends to Council all the budget proposals included in the submitted report and the reported approach to reserves and balances.

Option 4 – that the Cabinet approves the fees and charges for 2026/27, as detailed at Appendix 8 to the report.

Option 5 – that the Cabinet requests that further work is undertaken on some, or all, of the budget proposals and the approach to reserves and balances and that the Cabinet considers a revised position.

Preferred Option - Options 1, 3 and 4 are the preferred options. Assumptions, in the report, were based on objective research and the latest available information. The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget and the budget reductions included in the Director of Finance's report fulfilled that requirement.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves and commends to Council, on 4th March 2026:

1. The policy landscape and context in which the Council is setting its revenue budget for 2026/27.
2. The financial forecast for 2026/27 having regard to the Local Government Finance Settlements and associated funding announcements.
3. The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts at a value of £2.6m for 2026/27.
4. A proposed overall 2026/27 Council Tax increase of 4.99% for Oldham Council services (2.99% for general purposes and 2% Adult Social Care Precept) resulting in the charges set out at Table 10 of the report.

5. The Transformation Programme savings for 2026/27 at £2.000m.
6. The 2026/27 Budget Reduction proposals at a value of £8.105m.
7. The proposed transfer to reserves of £1.600m in 2026/27 to improve the financial robustness of the Council.
8. The proposal to draw on the Collection Fund for major preceptors of £155.564m for Borough Wide services and £129.237m for Council services.
9. The proposed net revenue expenditure budget for 2026/27 for the Council set at £368.053m.
10. The proposed fees and charges as set out in the schedule included at Appendix 8, of the Director of Finance's report.
11. The level of general fund balances supporting the 2026/27 budget of £18.865m underpinned by the agreed policy on Reserves.
12. That the Cabinet notes the alternative budget reduction proposals presented as part of the Liberal Democrat budget, which was previously scrutinised by the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board on 5th February 2026.

10

CAPITAL STRATEGY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27 TO 2030/31 AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP) POLICY STATEMENT

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance which set out the Capital Strategy for 2026/27 to 2030/31 and thereby the proposed 2026/27 capital programme, including identified capital investment priorities, together with the indicative capital programme for 2027/28 to 2030/31, having regard to the resources available over the life of the programme.

The Council's Capital Strategy and capital programme were set over a five-year timeframe. The proposed Capital Strategy and programme for 2026/27 to 2030/31 took the essential elements of the 2025/26 to 2029/30 and previous years' strategies and programmes and moved them forward in the context of the financial and political environment for 2026/27. The Strategy did however include a longer-term vision, a forward look at those projects that were likely to run beyond the five-year strategy and programme period or be initiated subsequently. This covered a timeframe for the 10 years from 2031/32 to 2040/41.

The format of the Capital Strategy reflected the requirements of the Prudential and Treasury Management Codes issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The Capital Strategy was presented at Appendix 1, to the report. Annex C of Appendix 1, to the report, established the proposed capital expenditure and financing for the period covered by the Capital Strategy, 2026/27 to 2030/31. The Council had set out its capital programme for the period 2026/27 to 2030/31 based on the principles of the Capital Strategy.

The Capital Programme and Capital Strategy were influenced by the level of resources available. The level of prudential

borrowing included reflected the financing available in the revenue budget, capital receipts align with forecasts, and grant funding and other contributions are based on already notified allocations or best estimates.



The capital programme for the period 2026/27 to 2030/31 included additional Transport schemes funded by Grant (£16.630m), additional Disabled Facilities Grant (£2.908m), additional Council funded investment in Transport specifically for Potholes (£2.000m) and additional resource for Emerging Priorities (£1.592m), both funded by Prudential Borrowing and an increase in The Use of Flexible Capital Receipts of £2.600m until its expiry of the direction in 2030, financed from Capital Receipts. The revised capital programme includes proposed expenditure for 2026/27 of £102.464m, of which the largest category is £72.953m of expenditure on regeneration, schools, transport and infrastructure projects within the Place Directorate. Total expenditure decreases to £49.047m, £14.923m, £ 5.972m and £1.592m in 2027/28, 2028/29, 2029/30 and 2030/31 respectively. The Strategy also advised that the Council was proposing to continue the use the flexibility provided by the Government to use capital receipts to fund the revenue cost of transformation.

In terms of the Capital Programme, the 2025/26-month 9 capital monitoring position presented alongside this report included expenditure projections that were a key determinant of the 2026/27 programme. The projected outturn spending position for 2025/26 was £70.200m being financed by: Grants and Other Contributions of £41.193m, Prudential Borrowing £23.983m, Capital Receipts of £4.714m and a slight revenue contribution of £0.310m. The actual expenditure to 31st December 2025 was £40.189m (57.25%) of the forecast outturn. The position will be kept under review and budgets would continue to be managed in accordance with forecasts.

In preparing the submitted report, there had been consultation with the members of the Capital Investment Programme Board, the Council's Leadership and Senior Management team on the proposed Capital Strategy and Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2030/31, which was also presented to and considered by the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 28th January 2026, which in itself represented a key element of the consultation process. The Scrutiny Board were content to commend the report to Cabinet. Any comments from Cabinet will be incorporated into the report presented to the Council on 4th March 2026.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option one (preferred Option) – to accept the proposed recommendations of Capital Strategy and Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2030/31, Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Policy, Treasury Management Indicators, and MRP policy, as detailed in the submitted report.

Option two – to suggest an alternative approach to capital investment for 2026/27 to 2030/31, including the revision of capital priority areas.

Resolved:

1. That the Capital Strategy for 2026/27 to 2030/31, detailed at Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be endorsed and commended to the Council on 4th March 2026.
2. That the Capital Programme for 2026/27 and indicative programmes for 2027/28 to 2029/30 at Annex C of Appendix 1 and summarised at sections 2.2 to 2.5 of the submitted report, be endorsed and commended to the Council on 4th March 2026.
3. That the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy as presented at Annex D of Appendix 1, to the submitted report, be endorsed and commended to the Council on 4th March 2026.
4. That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement 2026/27 and method of calculation and Prudential Indicators, detailed in Appendix 2 to the submitted report, be endorsed and commended to the Council on 4th March 2026.

11

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT ESTIMATES FOR 2026/27 TO 2030/31 AND FORECAST OUTTURN FOR 2025/26

The Cabinet received a joint report of the Director of Finance and Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive that set out for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the detailed budget estimates for 2026/27, the strategic estimates for the four years 2027/28 through to 2030/31 and outturn estimate for 2025/26. The report also set out the recommended dwelling, non-dwelling rents and service and concierge charges to be applied from April 2026.

The submitted report detailed the HRA 2026/27 proposed original budget and the forecast outturn for 2025/26. The opportunity was also taken to present the provisional strategic budgets for 2027/28 through to 2030/31.

After taking all relevant issues into account, the projected financial position for 2025/26 was estimated to be a £3.723m positive variance when compared to the original budget forecast for 2025/26 approved at the Budget Council meeting, 6th March 2025. This was largely due to the contribution to capital of £3m being delayed until 2026/27. It was noted that the revised forecast outturn would still see HRA expenditure at £0.757m greater than income, and reserves reducing as a result.

The 2026/27 position had been presented after allowing for a proposed increase in dwelling rents of 4.8%, an increase in non-dwelling rents in line with individual contracts, a nominal increase of 2% on service charges and the setting of Extra Care Housing concierge charges to fully recover costs. The majority of HRA tenants are either the recipient of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, and it is assumed that the proposed increase

in rents would not be an additional financial pressure to the majority of tenants.

The financial projections for the HRA over the period 2025/26 to 2030/31 showed an overall reduction in the level of balances from £22.173m at the start of 2025/26 to £15.628m at the end of 2030/31.

The HRA detailed budget for 2026/27, strategic estimates for the four years 2027/28 to 2030/31, and the outturn estimate for 2025/26, were presented to the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board on 28th January 2026. The Scrutiny Board was content to commend the report to Cabinet without amendment.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option one (preferred Option) – to approve the recommendations in the report.

Option two – to not approve the recommendations in the report.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves and commends to Council, on 4th March 2026:

1. The forecast HRA outturn for 2025/26 (as per Appendix A, to the report).
2. The proposed HRA budget for 2026/27 (as per Appendix B, to the report).
3. The strategic estimates for 2026/27 to 2030/31 (as per Appendix D, to the report).
4. The proposed increase to dwelling rents for all properties of 4.8%.
5. The proposed increase to non-dwelling rents as per individual contracts.
6. The proposal that service charges are increased by 2%.
7. The proposal to set Extra Care Housing concierge charges to fully recover actual costs.

12

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT - 2026/27

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27.

The report outlined the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27, the Annual Investment Strategy, Borrowing Strategy, and Prudential Indicators. The Council is required through regulations supporting the Local Government Act 2003 to 'have regard to' the Prudential Code. The report was required to produce an annual Treasury Strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy setting out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to security and liquidity of those investments. The Strategy for 2026/27 covers.

- a. Economic Update.
- b. Prospects for Interest Rates
- c. The Current Balance Sheet and Treasury Position

- d. Liability Benchmark
- e. The Borrowing Strategy
- f. Debt Rescheduling
- g. The Investment Strategy
- h. Approved Counterparties, risk management and Investment Limits
- i. Treasury Indicators which limit the treasury risk and activities of the Council.

The report outlined the implications and key factors in relation to each of the above Capital and Treasury Management issues and made recommendations regarding the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27.

The report includes the most recently available economic background commentary which reflects the position as at December 2025.

The proposed Treasury Management Strategy was presented to and considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting of 14th January 2025. Following their review and scrutiny the Audit Committee was content to commend to this meeting of the Cabinet for consideration and/or comment before presentation to Council. It was reported that any comments from Cabinet will be incorporated into the reports presented to Council, on 4th March 2026.

Options/Alternatives considered:

In accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Cabinet have no alternative to considering and commending the submitted report to the Council, at its meeting on 4th March 2026. Therefore, no options or alternatives were presented.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet commends the following matters, detailed in the submitted report, to the Council, at its meeting on 4th March 2026:

1. The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) Projections, as detailed in paragraph 2.4.1, of the submitted report.
2. The Projected Balance Sheet position, by 31st March 2026 and future years as detailed in paragraph 2.4.1, of the submitted report.
3. The Liability Benchmark as detailed in paragraph 2.5, of the submitted report.
4. The Borrowing Strategy for 2025/26 as detailed in paragraph 2.6, of the submitted report.
5. The Annual Treasury Investment Strategy as detailed in paragraph 2.7, of the submitted report, including counterparties and treasury limits.
6. The Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as detailed in paragraph 2.8, of the submitted report.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Director of Workforce and Organisational Culture which described that

under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the 'power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the Authority thinks fit, subject to Section 41 of the Localism Act 2011'.

The submitted Pay Policy Statement (the 'Statement') sets out the Council's approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 to 43 of the Localism Act 2011.

The purpose of the Statement is to provide transparency and accountability regarding the Council's approach to setting the pay of its employees. It excludes teaching and other school staff working for the Local Authority under the purview of a School Governing Body. It identifies:

- The methods by which salaries of employees are determined.
- The detail and level of remuneration of its most senior staff, i.e. 'chief officers', as defined by the relevant legislation.
- The Committee(s) responsible for ensuring the provisions set out in this statement are applied consistently throughout the Council and recommending any amendments to the full Council.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

14

GREATER MANCHESTER VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY, FAITH & SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (VCFSE) ACCORD

The Cabinet received a report of the Director of Public Health, which advised that in November 2021 Greater Manchester (GM) established a Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Accord, which was a collaboration agreement between the public and VCFSE sectors with the aim of improving outcomes for Greater Manchester's residents. It was jointly owned by the VCFSE and public sectors in GM, including NHS GM, Transport for GM, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and all ten constituent local authorities.

The Accord was supported by an implementation plan and supporting activities at a GM level. At a local level adoption was locally led, with limited accountability or responsibility for reporting to GM on implementation.

A role of the Accord was to provide opportunities to build better understanding of roles across the different sectors and how these influence working relationships. It also provided a space for cross sector networking and identification of new and creative opportunities for collaboration. The commissioning and funding task and finish group have identified Social Value as a priority. They had identified current barriers to valuing the inherent social value of the sector through procurement and were developing proposals for how this could be done differently in future.

Oldham's Live Well Implementation Plan had identified cross sector workforce development as a key enabler for the delivery of the Live Well approach at scale and plans around this are in

progress. This includes the development of leadership skills and capacity withing the VCFSE sector, led by Action Together.

Through the Borough's Engagement Framework, the Council was exploring how it could use digital insight platform (Big Oldham Convo) to ensure that insight gathered through our VCFSE was valued, and that the infrastructure was in place to capture and utilise it more effectively.

The 2026 Priorities were:

- To develop an action plan around the Borough's workforce development priority, including a focus on improving understanding between sectors.
- To test and implement proposals developed by the commissioning and funding task and finish group for an alternative model to ensure the inherent social value of the VCFSE sector is valued in procurement.

Options/Alternatives considered:
No alternatives were presented.

Resolved:

1. That the Council commits to the vision and values of the Greater Manchester Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Accord.
2. That an SRO for the implementation of the Accord in Oldham be identified, along with officers within the Council, Integrated Care Board and Action Together who will be responsible for driving change.
3. That all partners recognise the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Accord and Public Sector Forum as the means of delivering on the accord commitments and establish clear lines of accountability and reporting through relevant organisational and Oldham Partnership governance structures.
4. That the Oldham Partnership sets out the Council's local commitments and measures of success, aligned to the Greater Manchester Accord, through the Oldham Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Strategy and Action Plan.
5. That public sector leaders in the Borough, be requested to commit to being active participants in the Forum and to supporting the development and delivery of the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Accord Strategy and Action Plan.

FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR ADULT SUBSTANCE MISUSE TREATMENT SERVICES 2026/27 - 2028/29

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Public Health, the purpose of which was to note the allocation of Public Health Grant funding for 2026/27 and indicative allocations for 2027/28 and 2028/29, which was ringfenced to improve Drug and Alcohol prevention, treatment and recovery delivery and associated outcomes for Oldham.

Approval was being sought to delegate authority to agree all decisions related to the utilisation of the Public Health Grant for Drug and Alcohol Prevention, Treatment and Recovery and

Individual Placement and Support Grant (IPS) to the Director of Public Health, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health, and Wellbeing for above funding period. This will include the authority to vary existing contracts (and any associated collaborative commissioning agreements) or award grant agreements or contracts stemming from a compliant procurement process. It is also requested that authority is delegated to the Borough Solicitor or nominee to carry out all necessary legal formalities, including the execution of any contracts.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option A (preferred Option) – To accept the Public Health Funding allocations for drug and Alcohol prevention, treatment and recovery and delegate authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing and the Borough Solicitor or their nominee, to enact all decisions regarding allocation of the funding, as outlined in the report. Further, delegate authority to the Borough Solicitor or their nominee to carry out all legal formalities linked to the enactment of decision regarding the spend of the Public Health Grant.

Option A was the recommended option because it would ensure that Oldham Council can continue to improve prevention and early intervention around drugs and alcohol, improve access to treatment and recovery services and improve quality of provision to ensure that Oldham residents receive the best possible support to tackle drug and alcohol related harm, which will in turn improve health outcomes and reduce the number of drug and alcohol related deaths.

Option B – To not accept the Public Health Funding allocations for drug and Alcohol prevention, treatment and recovery:

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet notes and accepts the Public Health Grant for Drug and Alcohol Prevention, Treatment and Recovery and Individual Placement and Support Grant (IPS) settlement for 2026/27 to 2028/29 including the conditions of funding outlined in this report and that confirmed funding for both elements is for 12 months, with indicative amounts for funding for future years, which will be confirmed at a later date. Agree that the grant funding is allocated to Public Health to enact, in line with the grant conditions.
2. That the Cabinet delegates authority for the execution of all decisions regarding utilisation of the funding from the Public Health Grant for Drug and Alcohol Prevention, Treatment and Recovery 2026/27 - 2028/29 to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing.
3. That the Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Public Health, in conjunction with the Borough Solicitor and Director of Finance (or their nominees), to vary existing contracts (and any associated collaborative commissioning agreements), issue grant agreements or award contracts stemming from a compliant procurement process.

4. That the Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Legal, or his nominee, to carry out all necessary legal formalities linked to the actions delegated to the Director of Public Health, including the execution of contracts.

16

OLDHAM STRATEGY - GIVING EVERY CHILD THE BEST START IN LIFE

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director for Children's Services, which was submitted with the purpose of seeking Member's agreement to: accept the funding allocated to Oldham by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) for delivery of years 5-7 of the Best Start in Life Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme (formerly the Family Hub and Start for Life Programme); to delegate decision-making authority for the detailed allocation of this funding to the Executive Director Children and Young People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Director of Finance, with the input of partners through the Family Hubs Board and to: approve the attached Best Start in Life delivery plan for Oldham, submit this to the DfE and publish it on the Council website before the deadline of 31 March 2026 in accordance with national guidance.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option One (preferred Option) - To approve the Best Start in Life plan and the delegated authority required to manage the Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies grant funding for 2026–2029.

Option Two - Not to approve the Best Start in Life plan and the delegated authority for managing the Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies grant funding for 2026–2029.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet:

1. Approves acceptance of the £5,633,300 funding allocated to Oldham for 2026/27 by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) for delivery of years 5-7 of the Best Start in Life Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme (formerly the Family Hub and Start for Life Programme)
2. Approves the delegation of authority for the detailed allocation of this funding to the Executive Director Children and Young People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Director of Finance, with the input of partners through the Family Hubs Board.
3. Approves the attached Best Start in Life delivery plan for Oldham, and that this be submitted to the DfE and

published before the deadline of 31 March 2026 in accordance with national guidance.

SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS BUSINESS CASE

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services, which set out proposals and to seek a mandate for creating a speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) service, integrated in the SEND and Inclusion Service.

This was part of the transformation plans for speech and language following the OFSTED Inspection in 2023; and was consistent with the Greater Manchester Balanced System work which has indicated a gap in Oldham in universal and targeted services around speech, language and communication.

This would allow greater join up of specialist teachers and specialist Speech and Language Therapy (S<) support for children and young people with speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN). The new provision would be school-facing and would deliver support directly in schools/settings.

There were a higher-than-average number of children and young people in Oldham who had an education, health, and care plan (EHCP) compared to national (Oldham: 6.7% and national: 5.3%).

The most common type of need for children and young people with an EHCP was autism, although SLCN remains a significant area of need.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 (preferred Option) – To expand the Oldham SEND & Inclusion Service, Specialist Services Team, by increasing the capacity for support related to SLCN through a settings-based delivery model. This would be achieved through the employment of speech and language therapists, advisory teachers, and therapy assistants (possibly, and in part, through conversion of current ELSEC and Better Communication Team staff), with increased capacity to create a new model.

Option 2 – To continue to commission all S< services for children and young people under the current arrangements with the current provider. Current ELSEC and Better Communication funding is time limited so these teams would be vulnerable under this option.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet agrees to the creation of a S< universal & targeted support team, through a joint funding agreement with the integrated care partnership (ICP), with the service to sit within the existing SEND & Inclusion Service team, alongside other specialist services.

MOSS MASTERPLAN AND SPATIAL DESIGN CODE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR CONSULTATION



The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive which was seeking approval of the draft Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss Masterplan and Spatial Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Appendix 1 to the submitted report) and supporting documents (Appendices 2 and 3) for a public consultation commencing no earlier than 25th February 2026. This would enable stakeholders to have the opportunity to provide comments on the draft Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss Masterplan and Spatial Design Code SPD before it was finalised and formally adopted.

The Cabinet were informed that the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document (DPD), was a strategic plan that covered nine of the ten Greater Manchester districts - Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan.

The Plan took effect and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the nine PfE authorities on 21st March 2024. PfE sets out the strategic framework for the Oldham Local Plan and allocated sites for employment and housing to meet our growth needs – in Oldham this included JPA10 Beal Valley and JPA12 Broadbent Moss. Policies JPA10 and JPA12 identify a range of criteria that development on Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss will need to address. In both cases this included a requirement for development to be ‘in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code as agreed by the local planning authority. This would include the need for an infrastructure phasing and delivery strategy’.

To address the criterion detailed above, in collaboration with the Council the leading Developer Consortium has prepared a masterplan and design code covering both the Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss allocations. Following agreement of the Motion ‘Ensuring Statutory and Enforceability for Places for Everyone Masterplans’ on 10th December 2025, a report was taken to Cabinet on 15th December 2026 at which Cabinet’s approved recommendations were to:

1. ‘Endorse the Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss Masterplan and Spatial Design Code and, in accordance with the Motion agreed at the Council meeting on 10th December, authorise officers to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document incorporating this Masterplan and Spatial Design Code.
2. To note the timetable for the preparation of the SPD included in this addendum report.
3. To note that the report was to be considered by the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board at the appropriate time in the new year, and should therefore be exempt from call-in, under Rule 14 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, in the Constitution and that the Executive Director of

Place/Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, be given delegated authority to respond to any feedback from Scrutiny as the Masterplan is taken forward to become a Supplementary Planning Document.



In line with the approved recommendation the Masterplan and Spatial Design Code, was now being prepared as a SPD that would be subject to public consultation from 25th February to 11.59pm on 27th March 2026.

Following the consultation and consideration of any comments received and any further work that may be needed, the final SPD will be brought back to Cabinet seeking formal approval to adopt and publish the SPD. Once approved and adopted the SPD will go on to inform future planning applications relating to JPA10 and JPA12 and will be a material consideration in their determination.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 (preferred Option) – to approve the draft Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss Masterplan and Spatial Design Code SPD and supporting documents, for a public consultation commencing no earlier than 25th February 2026. Option 2 - to not approve the draft Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss Masterplan and Spatial Design Code SPD and supporting documents, for a public consultation.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet approves the draft Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss Masterplan and Spatial Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Appendix 1, to the submitted report) and supporting documents (Appendices 2 and 3), as the basis for a public consultation, commencing no earlier than 25th February 2026.
2. That the Cabinet notes that the proposed Masterplan and Spatial Design Code was previously considered by the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board on 22nd January 2026, and endorsed to be taken forward for public consultation as an SPD, and therefore was exempt from call-in, under Rule 14 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution.

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EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting, for the following two items of business, on the grounds that they contain exempt information under paragraph 3 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and it would not, on balance, be in the public interest to disclose the reports.

20

PROCUREMENT OF A FINANCIAL INCLUSION SERVICE

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Resources that sought approval for the procurement of a financial inclusion service.

The Cabinet was being asked to consider and agree to procure a comprehensive financial inclusion service for a 3-year period, with option to extend for a further 3-year period subject to funding being available. This consolidated offer would work closely with Council teams and across the Oldham Partnership to support residents experiencing financial crisis and improve the financial resilience of individuals and communities. The funding would be provided by the Department of Work and Pensions via the Crisis and Resilience Grant Funding commencing on 1st April 2026.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 - Do not procure a Financial Inclusion Service.

Option 2 (Preferred Option) – To procure a Financial Inclusion Service.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet agrees:

1. To the procurement of a financial inclusion service for a period of three years with an option to extend for a further three-year period subject to available funding.
2. To the extension of the current grant funding arrangement with Citizens Advice for up to three months to allow for the procurement process to take place.
3. To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services and Sustainability to award the contract following the completion of the procurement process.
4. To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services and Sustainability, to approve any extensions to the contract as provided for within the original contract terms and where there is budget available.

21

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT SERVICE (ICES) AND MINOR ADAPTATIONS – APPROVAL TO TENDER

The Cabinet received a report of the Director of Adults Social Services (DASS), the purpose of which was to seek purpose approval to undertake a formal tender exercise for the provision of a new Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) contract, to commence no later than 1 October 2026. The proposed contract would run for a period of three years, until 30 September 2029, with the option to extend for a further two years to 30 September 2031, subject to satisfactory performance and market competitiveness.

The proposed procurement will be structured into two separate lots:

- Lot 1 – Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES)

- Lot 2 – Minor Adaptations Service



The current contract is held in the name of Millbrook Healthcare. The contract commenced on 1 October 2022 and is due to end on 30 September 2026. Although the contract includes an option to extend until 30 September 2029, this extension will not be utilised.

The Minor Adaptations element is currently included within the existing ICES contract however, this arrangement has not operated effectively, resulting in the Council having to rely on alternative contractors to meet demand. Separating the service into two distinct lots will ensure clearer accountability, improved performance, and appropriate market engagement for each service area.

Options/Alternatives considered:

- a. Option 1 – Exercise the extension to the ICES contract from 1st October 2026 up to 30th September 2029.
- b. Option 2 (the preferred Option) – To approve the re-tender for the Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) and Minor Adaptations for a period of 3 years from 1st October 2026 to 30th September 2029 with an option to extend for a further two years until 30th September 2031.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet:

1. Approves commencement of a tender process for the provision of the Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES), structured into two lots:
 - Lot 1: Integrated Community Equipment Service
 - Lot 2: Minor Adaptations Service
2. Approves the proposed contract duration of three years (1 October 2026 – 30 September 2029), with an option to extend for a further two years (to 30 September 2031), subject to satisfactory performance and value for money (noting Note that the procurement exercise will be led by Oldham in partnership with Tameside, Stockport, with Rochdale expected to join subject to final governance approval).

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 6.50pm.

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