

## Portfolio Report

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Elaine Taylor, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

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

### Key Achievements for 2025/26

#### Major Investment in Communities

- Launched the £4.9m Communities Regeneration Partnership Fund to improve community spaces and strengthen local VCFSE organisations.

#### Community Safety

- Operation Vulcan delivered major enforcement successes, boosting community confidence and tackling entrenched criminal activity.
- Successful Hate Crime awareness campaign and training programme.

#### Public Protection

- Continued delivery of the annual Food Service Plan, with 72% of food businesses rated 5 ('very good') and 16% rated 4 ('good')

#### Housing

- Temporary accommodation reduced to 508 households, the lowest level since December 2023, reduced cost of TA spend by £2m, reduced B&B accommodation requirement to only 9 families (from 200+ at its peak), housing register reduced to 5,000 households (from over 8,000).
- Implemented Awaab's Law to ensure rapid responses to damp and mould complaints.

#### Environmental Improvements & Clean-Ups

- Relunched Don't Trash Oldham, clearing nine tons of waste in early phases.
- Delivered two new sweepers and cleared 1,000+ tons of leaves boroughwide.
- Responded to Storm Claudia, which caused over 1,000 fallen trees, with major emergency works.

#### Planning

- Oldham's planning committee approved applications for c1,700 new homes.
- Successfully implemented the Article 4 Direction on the conversion of houses to smaller HMOs
- Started consultation on Oldham's Local Plan and a new SPD for Beal Valley / Broadbent Moss strategic site
- Introduced a new validation checklist and QR-coded neighbour letters to improve application transparency and access.

#### VCFSE Sector

- Established a new VCFSE–Public Sector Partnership Forum and supported 1,139 new volunteers, 652 groups and 62 new community groups formed

**Housing:** The numbers in temporary accommodation are continuing to reduce, we are delivering financial savings and we continue to assist families who need housing support. Numbers of homeless households placed in temporary accommodation is down to an all time low at 508 with 10 families and 2 singles placed in hotel accommodation inside the Borough.

The new Allocation's Policy is being considered by Cabinet, bringing a new focus on rightsizing so we can make better use of the social housing stock in the borough and help to address supply and demand issues for larger family accommodation. The new Policy will introduce an annual lettings plan which will ensure a certain percentage of properties are allocated to each reasonable

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preference group rather than just highest band first. This will ensure we support a wider group of residents across bandings to help with the prevention agenda.

Following on from the motion previously discussed at Full Council, relating to free school travel for children in Temporary Accommodation, I'm pleased to announce the GMCA have announced that they will fund this provision.

**Planning:** We have successfully implemented the Article 4 Direction on the conversion of houses to smaller HMOs and started two public consultations - one on the Publication version of the Local Plan and one on the Beal Valley & Broadbent Moss Masterplan SPD. Planning committee have also granted planning permission to several large residential developments and a new hotel to provide 180 new rooms / suites within the historic Ram Mill in Chadderton.

The residential developments granted permission include 72 affordable homes on a PfE allocation at Rosary Road in Fitton Hill and 149 new homes (60 of which are to be affordable) on a former school site in South Chadderton. Between those two developments alone, we'll see 85 new homes created for those in most need of affordable housing for social rent.

We continue to support our Housing Association partners in the submission of plans for affordable housing, including homes for social rent, across the borough - this has seen several new proposals for 100% affordable home developments on PfE allocations. This will help us exceed the 5-year target to deliver 500 new social rent homes in the borough from 2024 to 2029.

**Community Safety and Cohesion:** Operation Vulcan partnership in Derker has helped tackle anti-social behaviour and crime through intelligence led problem-solving: one important example is at the bowling green at Stoneleigh Park, which was a repeated target of criminal damage (and has previously cost the Council significant funds to repeatedly repair) has now been secured with full access controls in place for lawful users. Work is now ongoing to review the CCTV offer within the park and how this can potentially be improved too.

Work undertaken by the District Youth Team to divert children and young people away from anti-social behaviour and violence across the borough has been showcased in the GM Deputy Mayor's Police and Crime Plan Annual Report. The Council has submitted its annual Prevent benchmark assessment to the Home Office for the work undertaken to safeguard individuals against radicalisation. Oldham's Prevent safeguarding referral pathways have already been recognised as exceeding the expected standards following a market testing exercise.

**Districts:** The Community Regeneration Capital Grants Fund has now been delivered, providing a significant boost to Oldham's voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector. The programme was designed to strengthen the borough's network of physical community spaces - the places where residents come together to meet, connect, learn, and participate in community life. This aligns with wider Oldham priorities to create healthier, happier communities and to make Oldham a great place to live.

A total investment of £4,900,000 has been awarded to a diverse range of organisations across all five districts of Oldham, ensuring equitable distribution of resources and supporting locally rooted initiatives. This funding is enabling community organisations to improve and develop their spaces, expand services, and deliver the support, activities, and positive interventions that residents rely on. Through this investment, Oldham is strengthening the capacity of its VCFSE sector, supporting neighbourhood resilience, and enhancing the quality and accessibility of community spaces across the borough.

**Waste & Cleansing:** Our waste management teams receive regular complaints about contaminated bins. As part of our proactive approach, teams have focused on identifying contaminated waste bins across the borough through a targeted intervention. As a result, an additional 705 abandoned or contaminated bins have been removed from the borough – this brings the total to 869 between October and December 2025. We continue to invest in Council Services, and as part of this process, we are bringing Services back in-house: this includes Bulky Bobs, where we are developing a revised, cheaper pricing model, making it more accessible to the residents of the borough.

Keeping our neighbourhoods clean is a top priority, and we're continuing to crack down on fly-tipping across the borough. Whenever we have enough evidence, we take strong enforcement action against those responsible. A key part of this work is the new Rapid Action Team, which will respond

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quickly to identify and remove flytipping before it causes further problems in our communities and work alongside Don't Trash Oldham to help the Council focus on areas that need extra attention, while working closely with residents and community groups to create a cleaner, safer and more sustainable place to live for the long term.

**Parks, Countryside and Green Infrastructure:** Core maintenance continues across parks, highways, cemeteries and public open spaces. Seasonal hedge/shrub management, flower bed maintenance, and winter bedding installations remain on schedule. Leaf clearance operations continue across priority routes and high-footfall areas. Operational focus remains on safety, presentation and environmental resilience across parks, countryside sites and green corridors. Biodiversity actions continue with habitat management, selective reduced mowing, pollinator-friendly planting and woodland care and tree planting, which supports our climate adaptation goals. Ongoing infrastructure improvements, such as, paths, furniture and signage, are also important element to make the spaces welcoming for visitors.

**Play Areas – Safety Compliance & Maintenance:** Borough-wide play area inspections continue in line with statutory and risk-based frequency. Identified defects are addressed through the programmed maintenance schedule to ensure equipment remains safe, compliant and accessible. Surface repairs, structural checks and replacement of high-risk components are a priority to maintain public safety and reduce liability exposure. To maintain our excellent play areas, this administration is investing an additional £150K to upgrade play equipment and play surfaces across the borough. This work will be completed in the coming months.

**Development, Investment & Community Growing Hubs:** Externally funded improvement works and capital-backed environmental investment continues across the borough. Community Growing Hubs continue to be developed and supported, providing local food growing opportunities, community activation and neighbourhood resilience benefits. The hubs create an excellent environment for learning, well-being- and social interaction.

**Crematorium and Cemeteries:** Invites to tender for 3 cremator replacements have now taken place. Once the supplier has been selected, the work to alter the existing crematorium building and accommodate the new cremators will be undertaken.

**Recommendations:** Council is requested to note the report.