



Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Chris Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways

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

Key Achievements for 2025/26

Delivery of Major Highways Programmes

- Completed the full 2024/25 highways capital programme, securing additional regional funding for further priority schemes.
- Significant progress on 2025/26 resurfacing, including major routes such as Middleton Road and Buckstones Road.

Improved Winter Resilience

- Delivered a robust winter service including 51 full grits, 2,200+ tonnes of salt used & 2,000 grit bins filled.

Street Lighting Modernisation

- Completed major phases of the LED replacement programme, achieving a 3.65% energy reduction and 62-tonne carbon reduction through new lighting assets.

Bee Network Improvements

- Secured £7.3m for walking and cycling schemes, £21m for School Streets, and £19m for Bee Network improvements, supporting safer, greener travel across the borough.
- Expanded the School Streets programme, including the new St Luke's scheme, improving safe routes to school.
- Removed the 9:30am concessionary travel restriction, allowing older and disabled residents to travel free at any time.
- Bus and tram fares frozen until the end of 2026, maintaining affordability for residents.

Progress on Major Strategic Transport Schemes

- Advanced key CRSTS and regeneration schemes including Quality Bus Transit, St Mary's Way, Market Street, and Mumps design stages.

Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan:

Consultation on the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan closed earlier this month, and we look forward to working with TfGM to finalise that important plan for improving Oldham and GM's transport network over the coming decades.

We're currently trialling our latest School Street at St Luke's CofE Primary School in Chadderton. We've had lots of interest from schools across the borough in the School Streets programme, and so we thank those that have contacted the council wanting to explore options for their local school.

Bee Network:

Delighted to report that from 1 March, the 9.30am restriction on concessionary passes has been permanently removed, so that older and disabled residents can travel free on Bee Network buses at any time. All bus and tram fares remain frozen until the end of 2026, including the £2 single fare.

Better transport is central to connecting communities and to allow businesses to thrive, so residents can enjoy healthy, happy lives. Through the Bee Network, the Council are helping to build a joined-up transport system that connects people with places and opportunities. We're working to improve all your journeys, no matter how you travel: by road, bus, tram, train, walking, wheeling and cycling. This includes a major scheme to improve the main route between Rochdale, Royton, Oldham and Ashton town centres (the A627 and A671), which is used by the 409 bus service, one of the busiest bus routes in Greater Manchester, and travelled by thousands of residents every day. Work on this route is taking place in phases through to 2027. Public engagement continues to place on the proposals for the Oldham section of the route and more information is available on the Council's website and on the Bee Network sites.

Winter Maintenance:

The service has continued to deliver winter maintenance across the borough over a number of months, prioritising primary routes and highway safety. The cold weather has meant that teams have had to undertake regular gritting. This has been generally effective and was supported by the relatively little snowfall.

To date, there have been 51 full grits of the primary routes and 15 pre grits of the higher routes (over 300m). Over 2,200 tonnes of salt have been used and over 2,000 grit bins filled. Teams will continue to monitor conditions, and information is routinely shared via social media platforms.

Highways Maintenance:

Every pothole reported to Oldham Council is inspected by a qualified highway safety inspector, and each defect is then categorised according to its severity, size, location, and the level of risk it presents to road users. This approach follows the council's established highway maintenance policies and a national risk-based framework used by many local authorities to ensure a consistent and rigorous approach to highway inspection & safety.

Each defect is classified, and where a repair is needed, this is prioritised to ensure that the most urgent repairs are prioritised to ensure highway safety and limit any further degradation of the network. Determining factors are:

- **Depth and size of the defect**

Oldham Council criteria means that any defect that is of a depth exceeding 4cm on a carriageway as a pothole. For footways, this is 2.5cm. Any report or location meeting the above criteria is then assessed for priority. Any defects below the above dimensions are still recorded and timetabled for re-visits.

- **Location and degree of risk**

The potential danger posed to road users is a key part of the categorisation process. Defects considered higher risk, because of their size, depth, or location, are assigned higher priority and repaired within shorter timescales. Some urgent defects can require attention within as little as two hours, while lower-risk issues are scheduled over longer periods.

- **Overall condition and likelihood of deterioration**

Some defects may be monitored rather than repaired immediately if the assessment concludes they currently present lower risk. Defects assessed as "low priority" are typically subject to ongoing monitoring via the planned inspection process, rather than immediate repair, which is consistent with a risk-based maintenance approach.

Even when a defect is rated low priority, it remains logged and is checked during subsequent planned routine inspections. If its condition worsens or the risk level increases, its priority status can be upgraded and repair scheduled sooner.

All reports contribute to the highways team's understanding of the network condition, and continued reporting plays an important role in maintaining road safety, in addition to the various planned inspection regimes.

Highways Permitting

The Streetworks team receives approximately 15,000 permit applications per year. These consist mainly of planned and urgent utility works, the rest being local authority works and minor contractor works both planned and emergency. Using Greater Manchester Roadworks Applications Permits Scheme, officers analyse the application and grant / refuse once traffic management, dates, times, and coordination has taken place. The aim of this is to ensure that planned roadworks don't cause additional issues by overlapping with other planned operations. Once determined, teams also update local ward members, businesses, residents, and public transport companies.

Unfortunately, there are also emergencies that give little time to plan or inform residents, and these include burst water mains, lost electricity connections, collapsed sewers or a good recent example is the closure on the Manchester Road roundabout which was necessary for emergency TfGM led signals work after a car drove into signal boxes. In such situations, we are limited in the engagement and communication we can undertake, but we do work with partners to manage traffic flow in the areas and ensure works are completed as quickly as possible.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.