

Date: 21 August 2026



Rt Hon. Angela Rayner MP
Secretary of State for Housing,
Communities and Local Government
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Legal Services
Oldham Council Offices,
Spindles Shopping Centre
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Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Governance Failure at Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and Inability to Appoint a Council Leader

In consultation with my Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer here at Oldham Council, I am writing to formally update you on the governance situation here following the issuance of the statutory report under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

As set out in the report considered by Council last night (Thursday 20 August 2026), the authority has been unable to appoint a Leader of the Council following meetings held on 20 May 2026, 15 June 2026, 1 July 2026 and 15 July 2026 and 20 August. Despite repeated opportunities, political groups have been unable to secure sufficient support for the appointment of a Leader and the formation of an administration.

Oldham operates a Leader and Cabinet executive model. The continuing absence of a Leader means that the authority remains unable to establish normal executive governance arrangements, appoint Cabinet Members, allocate portfolios, designate a Lead Member for Children's Services and provide clear strategic political leadership.

Whilst officers continue to discharge their professional responsibilities, I am utilising emergency delegations afforded to me within the Council's Constitution enabling essential executive decisions to be taken. It is recognised that these arrangements were intended only as a temporary measure and are not a sustainable substitute for democratic executive governance.

The prolonged omission by Council to appoint a Leader has now reached a point where it raises significant concerns regarding constitutional compliance, governance effectiveness, accountability and public confidence. I have also identified governance, operational, legal and reputational risks together with the potential for statutory intervention should the position remain unresolved.

I am therefore formally notifying you that, notwithstanding extensive efforts by political groups, senior officers and support offered through the Local Government Association, Oldham Council remains unable to appoint a Leader and establish a functioning administration.

The Council will continue to take all reasonable steps to resolve this matter locally. However, given the ongoing governance impasse, I considered it appropriate to bring the current position to your attention in accordance with the recommendations contained within my statutory report.

Should the Department require any further information, copies of relevant reports or details of steps taken by the authority to address the situation, I would be pleased to provide them.

Yours faithfully,



Shelley Kipling
Chief Executive
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

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Lee Walsh
S151 and Director of Finance
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Alex Bougatef
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