Place Directorate

Environment Scrutiny

5 Nov 2026

Waste and Fly Tipping

Main Topics

Waste Service

- Service Summary
- Issues
- Challenges
- Performance
- Recovery Plan

Fly Tipping & Litter

- Issues
- Challenges
- Performance
- Service Improvement

Opportunity for questions/discussions on both items

Waste Collection

- Oldham Council is a **Waste Collection Authority**, responsible for collecting household waste and recycling from residents.
- GMCA manages the waste disposal contract on behalf of the nine Greater Manchester councils, managing the treatment, recycling, recovery and disposal of municipal waste
- The contract was extended in 2024 and now runs to 2034
- Oldham contributes funding towards the cost of waste treatment and disposal through the GMCA levy and contractual arrangements.

Financial Year	Cost
2024/25	£17.680m
2025/26	£18.262m
2026/27 (Budget)	£18.966m

- Waste disposal remains one of the council's largest environmental service costs.
- Annual costs have increased by **£582k** between 2024/25 and the 2025/26.

Funding challenges

Increasing Cost Pressures

- Rising waste disposal costs.
- Inflationary pressures across waste sector.
- Increasing costs; fuel, vehicle operating costs
- Population growth and increasing waste volumes.
- Costs associated with contamination of recycling streams.

Waste Growth

- Population growth and housing development can increase the volume of waste requiring collection and disposal.
- Increased bulky waste & fly-tipping
- Household recycling centres continue to experience high demand.

Opportunities Through GMCA Arrangements

- Access to large-scale waste treatment and disposal infrastructure that would not be affordable for a single authority.
- Economies of scale achieved through a Greater Manchester-wide approach to waste disposal.
- Long-term contractual certainty, providing greater stability in disposal costs and service provision.
- Access to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) across Greater Manchester for residents.
- Regional investment in waste treatment, energy recovery and recycling facilities.
- Potential to support Greater Manchester-wide initiatives that reduce residual waste and increase recycling performance.

Opportunities for Oldham

- Increase household recycling rates and reduce costly residual waste disposal.
- Promote waste prevention, reuse and repair initiatives.
- Expand commercial and trade waste services to generate income.
- Increase utilisation of HWRCs for recycling and reuse rather than disposal.
- Improve recycling quality by reducing contamination.
- Support residents and businesses to manage waste more sustainably.

Trade Waste Operations

Income Generation Opportunities

- Expand trade waste collection services to local businesses.
- Develop competitive commercial waste packages for SMEs.
- Increase customer base by targeting businesses currently using private sector providers.
- Offer recycling services as well as residual waste collections to improve margins and sustainability credentials.

Waste Collection Challenges over Summer

Service disruption since early summer 2026 was due to the following factors, some of which are ongoing. However, Service delivery has recovered since late Sep, and routine collections have been completed for throughout October and onwards, with some minor/localised exceptions.

What happened

Extreme weather, sickness absence, staff turnover and the loss of experienced route knowledge has affected planned domestic and street litter collections.

Impact

Incomplete rounds and stood-down collections increased resident and member concern, missed-bin reports and escalations.

What is happening now

A recovery plan began in early October, with actions and time frames agreed to improve delivery in the short and medium term.

Key message

The service accepts that collection performance fell below the expected standard. The immediate priority is stabilising workforce capacity and ensuring day-to-day service delivery while building greater resilience for recurring pressures.


OUR SERVICE IN NUMBERS
99,070
PROPERTIES
receiving a regular waste collection
92,270
HOUSEHOLDS
2 collections per week
6,800
FLATS
1 collection per week
~3,000
TRADE WASTE
collections for local businesses each week
DAILY OPERATION
25
VEHICLES
deployed every day
EACH CREW
1
DRIVER
+
2
LOADERS
COMPRESSED HOURS
4 long days over 5
=
1 REST DAY
each week

How the service operates

A lean, borough-wide collection model with seasonal crew deployment and up to two domestic visits per week.

Weekly	3 weekly	3 weekly	3 weekly
Organic (food/garden) collection	General waste	Paper & Card	Plastic, glass & cans

The service also provides trade waste collections for business customers and has absorbed additional housing growth across the borough.

What disrupted service delivery

Extreme heat

Sickness absence exceeded planned contingency arrangements.

Workforce resilience

HGV driver recruitment and retention, staff turnover and loss of experienced employees.

Operational constraints

Route pressures, traffic delays, access issues and fleet repair / maintenance challenges.

Route knowledge

Loss of experienced staff reduced local route knowledge and service resilience.



Workforce resilience is the principal challenge

Position reported as of 14 September 2026.



driver vacancies



loader vacancies

Recruitment market

National labour market pressures and competition from higher-paid, less demanding roles.

Availability

Sickness absence and annual leave further reduce deployable capacity.

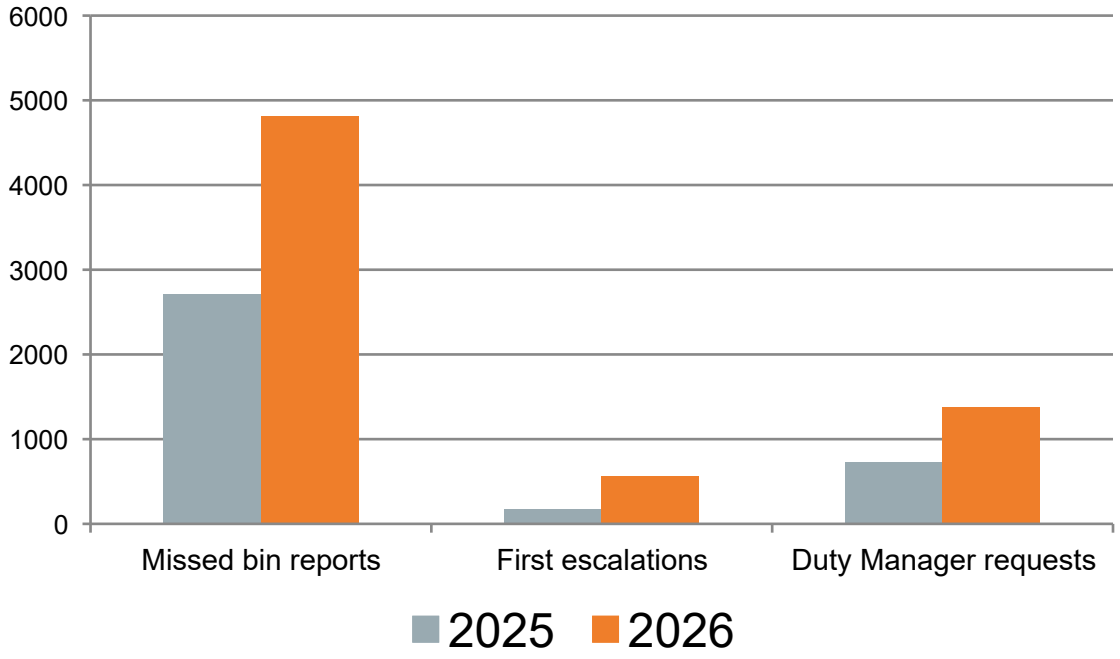
Experience

An ageing workforce, turnover and loss of experienced staff affect resilience and route knowledge.


Oldham Council
Waste Management Workforce Profile 2026
Green and Growing
Keeping Oldham, Clean, Green & Sustainable
A cleaner brighter Oldham for tomorrow
Reduce waste
Reuse resources
Recycle more
A greener Oldham
People | Places | A Greener Future
Loaders By Age Range
Total 41
70+ 0
60 - 69 5
50 - 59 5
40 - 49 10
30 - 39 9
20 - 29 11
Under 20 1
0 2 4 6 8 10 12
Number of employees
Gender Split (Loaders)
Male 40 (97.6%)
Female 1 (2.4%)
41 Total
Male Female
Drivers By Age Range
Total 28
70+ 1
60 - 69 10
50 - 59 7
40 - 49 5
30 - 39 5
Under 30 0
0 2 4 6 8 10 12
Number of employees
Gender Split (Drivers)
Male 28 (100%)
Female 0 (0%)
28 Total
Male Female
Our Waste Management Team (Permanent staff only)
69 Operational staff
41 Loaders
28 Drivers
Key Insights
• 18 of 28 drivers (64%) are aged 50+
• Loader workforce is concentrated in ages 20 – 49 (73%)
• 97% of our operational workforce are male
• Succession planning and recruitment remain key priorities
Figures relate to permanent Waste Management employees only and exclude agency workforce.
Investing in our people to keep Oldham clean, green and sustainable
A cleaner, greener and more sustainable Oldham for future generations
Proudly delivering waste and recycling services to almost 100,000 properties across Oldham.
Workforce data based on permanent Waste Management employees at 2026. Agency workforce is excluded from this analysis.

Customer Contact Increased

Reported demand between 1 June and 17 September, comparing 2025 with 2026.



4,806
missed bin reports
+77%

563
first escalations
+231%

1,372
Duty Manager requests
+89%

Actions already taken

The service used a range of measures to protect priority collections and support frontline delivery.

1. Operational managers deployed onto rounds
2. Green rounds stood down where necessary
3. Saturday collections where staff volunteered
4. Rest-day working
5. Additional support crews where possible
6. Active sickness management
7. Driver support from Street Cleansing
8. Clearer resident and member communications
9. Prioritisation of three-weekly collections

Recovery plan launched

The first recovery-plan meeting took place in early October 2026, with clear actions and time frames agreed.

Objective

Address immediate service instability while improving resilience over the short and medium term.

Focus

Workforce capacity, recruitment and retention remain central because workforce resilience is the principal operational challenge.

Next Steps

The next meeting for the Recovery Plan is in Nov 2026 during which evidenced led business cases will be presented



Key Strands of the Recovery Group

1. Workforce & People Task Group
2. Customer & Communications Group
3. Digital & IT Improvement Group
4. Performance & Assurance Group
5. Fleet Recovery Group
6. Financial Control

Fly Tipping

1.Fly Tipping and illegal waste management remain a major issue nationally and locally

2.Challenge is urban and rural with hotspots across the borough

3.Criminal and organised crime as well as the individual, mainly domestic waste or bulky items

4.Incidents of tipping are investigated and where evidence is available, graduated enforcement action is taken

5.Use of cameras, third part evidence and where possible and financially viable, physical barriers to prevent further fly tipping – community led initiatives

6.Land-owners are responsible for removing waste from their land and enforcement teams work with them to secure compliance

Litter

1. Persistent problem boroughwide

2. Dedicated council sweeper and cleansing teams – limited resource and focus is on primary routes across the borough

3. Seasonal variations and highway safety feed into the service planning and delivery

4. Teams support local groups and volunteers with litter picks and community initiatives

5.New bins introduced over the last 2 years which provide additional capacity and easier / safer to empty

Fly Tipping Statistics – Enforcement

Year	Number of Flytipping Incidents	Investigated	Notices	FPNs Flytipping	FPNs Other	Prosecutions	Abandoned Vehicles
2021-22	5,903	3542	214	448	28	30	114
2022-23	5,672	3403	890	208	52	27	87
2023-24	5,022	3013	1514	104	18	14	75
2024-25	5,959	3575	1205	206	20	6	199
2025-26	6742	4045	647	225	22	0	102

Fly Tipping & Litter Statistics – Collection

Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of Reports	5533	4867	5723	6348
Tonnage Removed	1368	1029	1061	1089

Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Number of Reports	990	921	1301	710
Tonnage Removed	783	904	978	

Moving Forward

- New approach to cleansing and fly tipping collection – IT and end to end solutions
- District collection model so reducing in response and cleansing times
- Use of mobile cameras to challenge fly tipping – difficult to sustain, susceptible to damage and not always evidentially strong
- Physical barriers to prevent fly tipping
- Cross Regional Working as part of the national response to illegal waste and fly tipping
- Expand support for local groups to do more themselves