

**Present:** The Mayor – Councillor Ur-Rehman (Chair)

Councillors Ahmad, Akhtar, A. Alexander, G. Alexander, Ali, Ames, Ball, M Bashforth, S Bashforth, Bates, Blyth, Briggs, Brownridge, A Chadderton, Chauhan, Cosgrove, Dawson, Dean, Dearden, Fielding, Garry, Gloster, Haque, Harkness, Harrison, Heffernan, Hibbert, Hudson, Iqbal, Jabbar, Judge, Kirkham, Klonowski, Larkin, Malik, McCann, McLaren, McMahan, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Qumer, Rehman, Roberts, Salamat, Sedgwick, Shah, Shuttleworth, Stretton, Sykes, Toor, Williamson, Williams and Wigglesworth

1

**QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS FROM THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ON WARD OR DISTRICT ISSUES**

The Mayor advised the meeting that the first item on the agenda in Open Council was Public Question Time. The questions had been received from members of the public and would be taken in the order in which they had been received. Council was advised that if the questioner was not present then the question would appear on the screen in the Council Chamber.

The following questions had been submitted:

1. Question received from MetroMeerkat via Twitter:

“Over the last 6 years, with most budgets & services being cut, how has number of Oldham Councillors & their direct costs changed?”

Councillor Shah, Cabinet Member for Performance and Corporate Governance, responded that the number of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Councillors has remained at sixty for many years. The Council had recently resolved that this was the appropriate number of councillors given the size of the population in the borough which ensure there was not democratic deficit.

The direct costs of councillors were the allowances which were paid to councillors. The level of these allowances were recommended to the Council by an Independent Remuneration Panel.

2. Question received from Martin Mathews via Twitter:

“What work’s being done with the regional schools commissioner to address the underperformance of secondary schools in Oldham?”

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills responded that the Local Authority worked closely with the new appointed Regional Schools Commissioner and with other partners in the school improvement process such as the

Department for Education and OFSTED. It was important to remember that many of the secondary schools across Oldham performed very well and that under achievement was not the norm in all secondary schools. Where the local authority had concerns about maintained secondary schools there was a robust programme of support and intervention that was negotiated with schools. Many of the good and outstanding schools undertook this work on the Council's behalf, in some cases schools from outside the Borough were brokered in for specific support. Where the local authority had concerns about an Academy, the regulations were clear, those concerns were brought to the attention of the Regional Schools Commissioner and it was for the Commissioner and DfE to take action for the improvement of academies. As a local authority, positive relationships were sought with all academies in Oldham in the Council's role as Champion of Excellence for all and believed that every school should be good or outstanding in the borough. In most cases the relationships were strong and improvement was evident in academies. However, in some cases where improvement was too slow, representations had been made to DfE and they were taking action.

3. Question received from HackOldham via Twitter:

"How can we get Oldham Schools to engage with @STEMNET? There are very few requests in the borough [stemnet.org.uk](http://stemnet.org.uk)"

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills responded that STEMNET linked with all 163 state funded secondary schools in Greater Manchester which included all Oldham Schools through the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry. STEMNET had contacted STEM teachers in in Oldham schools and provided three free services: STEM Advisory Network, STEM Ambassadors and STEM Club support. It was for each school and governing body to decide which organisations they worked with. Some schools and colleges were actively involved. Blue Coat School was a specialist science school and sent representatives to STEMNET regional hub meetings and participated in the Engineering without Borders scheme. The Regional Science Centre participated in the STEM ambassadors scheme and participated in courses and visits. OBLG would be working with the Museum of Science and Industry to see if further links could be developed through Enterprise Hubs.

4. Question received from Joe Martin via email:

"On the council website under the Selective Licensing of Private Landlords - Consultation Report and final proposals report, you stated that the council will establish private sector landlord forum. Why has this not been established yet? The cabinet member also agreed to set up a dedicated website for this scheme, why has this not been done yet? I have met and spoken with many landlords who are confused in what the aims/objectives are for this scheme. Some landlords have asked for assistance in problems with their tenants but the council

didn't seem to be bothered. Why is this? To be honest with you this was a labour party scheme and the council staff members don't even know what to do.”



Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport responded that the scheme, which would last for 5 years, began in St. Mary's in May 2015 and was now active in 5 of the 8 neighbourhoods with the other three going live from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016. The scheme would benefit landlords in a number of ways. As part of the licensing regime, the Council would provide landlords with a range of support services and training opportunities in order to ensure that they were able to meet the conditions of their licence and assisted in the running of their businesses. Work was ongoing on a dedicated website which would be launched shortly and were the Council couldn't help, the Council would signpost landlords to other agencies. The Council would be running landlord forums but officers were waiting until the final neighbourhoods were operational in January 2016 so that all landlords could be invited. The Council's Cabinet have requested a yearly update for the schemes and the first report was due in April. Mr. Martin was asked to provide more specific details to substantiate his statements in order to provide reassurance. Councillor Hibbert commended the excellent staff.

5. Question received from Elroy Walters via Twitter:

“Are M&S still opening in Oldham? If so when? There are rumours of them pulling out...”

Councillor McMahon, Cabinet Member for Economy & Enterprise confirmed that Marks and Spencer were still coming. He further responded that the Council had entered into a legal agreement in December 2014. Demolition of the remaining properties was ongoing with completion plan in February 2016. It was currently planned that the stores were due to be opened in summer 2018.

6. Question received from Joe Fitzpatrick via email:

“As the young leader abandons his Vision for Oldham, leaving the residents to pay the bill for his crazy schemes, could he tell us.

Will he be able to manage on the MP's salary, or will he continue to collect his councillors allowance, whilst working in London.”

Councillor McMahon, Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise, responded that it was clear he was not leaving Oldham. He would be fighting in a different place for the best interests of the town he cared about and for the town to be a better place. Proof that Oldhamers believed in those schemes was borne out by the election results. He confirmed that this would be his last Council meeting as Leader.

7. Question received from Graham Ankers via Facebook:

“Would members and council agree that the condition of social housing properties made of 'Wimpey no fines' is not to a satisfactory standard, and that residents of around 70 properties should not have to live in fuel poverty due to notoriously cold hard to heat homes that are prone to condensation that leads to mould which in turn leads to health problems?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport, responded that he was aware of the issues and was working with ward councillors investigating the concerns. He confirmed that a complaint on this matter had been reviewed thoroughly through the Council's Complaint Procedure. The complainant had been advised that if they disagreed with the Council's view that they should contact the Housing Ombudsman to seek an independent review.

The Council's Contractor, Inspiral, was currently undertaking a survey of houses to review if there was an issue of condensation and he assure that he would address any issues with the contractor as they arose. The houses in Crossley had received substantial improvement through the Gateways to Oldham PFI scheme, which included new doors and windows, a new roof, a new kitchen and bathroom, re-wire, loft insulation and internal refurbishment. The houses had a Standard Assessment Procedure rating for energy efficiency above the social housing average.

8, Question received from Andrew Sayers via email:

“I would like to raise a question related to this news story:<http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/kind-hearted-volunteers-help-transform-10573979>

The building is located at the junction of Manchester Road/ Isle of Skye Road (A635) with Chew Valley Road (A669) (approx OS SD001 039)

**Question:** In light of the story of the homeless man who has taken up residence in the disused ex-Council bus stop/ public toilets in Greenfield, can the Council confirm what steps it takes to help the homeless in Oldham and Saddleworth? “

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport, responded that how the Council dealt with homelessness within Oldham was set out in its Homelessness Strategy. Since 2003, huge progress had been made in how homelessness was tackled in the Borough. The Council had moved away from reactive services at the point of crisis to funding services which focussed on the prevention of homelessness within the Borough. This included family mediation for young people and advice services for people at risk of losing their home through mortgage repossession. Oldham has had historically among the lowest levels of homelessness acceptances in Greater Manchester, with last year only 49 households being accepted as homeless. We've had excellent partnership working in place to address the issues and in 2014/15 services prevented homelessness in over 2,000 cases.

Front line statutory homelessness and housing advice services for all Oldham residents were provided by First Choice Homes Oldham on behalf of the Council through the One Point Housing Options Centre which was based at First Place on Union Street. The centre was open weekdays during office hours and people could present there during office hours or they could telephone the service. There was also a free phone number for households who had become homeless when the offices were closed. They could speak to staff who provided advice which included access to emergency temporary accommodation if required.

In the few cases where people were reported to be sleeping rough, links would be made with the person through neighbourhood based staff, usually policing staff, as they were out in the area throughout the evening/night. These staff were provided with information which included out of hours contact information that provided help to access services.

9. Question received from Kathy Brooks via email:

“I have been advised by council officials that the responsibility for removing the now defunct lighting under the council's street lighting replacement scheme rests with ENW. However ENW maintain that the responsibility lies with the Council Which is correct and who within the Council will take responsibility for ensuring that the appropriate body takes the necessary action?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport, confirmed that the responsibility was with the Council's contractor Eon, however, there was a need for Electricity North West for the provision of a suitable connection and this may have been where there was some confusion. If there was any doubt, contact should be made with the Council's Client team who would advise on each specific case.

At this point in the meeting, the Mayor advised that the time limit for this item had expired.

The Mayor reminded Members that the Council had previously agreed that, questions would be taken in an order which reflected the political balance of the Council. The following questions were submitted by Councillors on Ward or District Matters:

1. Councillor Roberts to Councillor Harrison:

“Given that Royton North has an older age profile than the rest of Oldham, and of England as a whole (22% of the population is aged over 65), I am very concerned by recent assessments of the growing gap in funding for social care for older people and the impact of Government cuts on the money available to pay providers of residential care for old people. Could the relevant Cabinet Member comment on the measures being taken by the Council to provide the best care for our older citizens, and in

particular whether the Four Seasons chain of care homes has any homes at risk in Oldham?”



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Councillor Harrison responded that in relation to residential care for older people, and the care sector more generally, the Council was working with the market to identify those cost pressures that they are experiencing, or likely to experience in the near future, such as the introduction of a new National Minimum wage from April 2016. Recommendations would then be as to what price we should be paid to providers for the delivery of care and support to people in residential care, or in their own homes, to enable statutory obligations to be met and to stabilise the market.

The Council was also working with health partners and with other local authorities across Greater Manchester to identify those areas where we could all benefit by doing things differently and joining up services. Very specialist services were a good example of that, where we might not need a great deal of provision, but when we would need it, it could be hard to get or very expensive.

More broadly, it was recognised that some of the ways in which services were delivered needed to change, to enable us to better manage demand in the future, by enabling more people to receive the care and support they need in their own home, or in supported accommodation such as extra care housing, where it is safe and appropriate for them to do so. Tandleview in Royton was an excellent example of this, where accommodation and care was delivered in a different way than residential care. The Cabinet Member also confirmed that Four Seasons did not operate any homes in Oldham.

2. Councillor Fielding to Councillor Brownridge:

“The area of greenspace to the rear of properties on Coronation Road Failsworth suffers from flooding following periods of heavy rain. Through correspondence with United Utilities, I know that they acknowledge that the drainage system in the area is not of sufficient capacity to cope with the demand placed on it. However they have advised that they do not have the money available to fix this problem within the next five years. Is there any remedial action that the Council can take to improve drainage on this land in the short term? This area is a popular recreation ground and shortcut for local residents.”

Councillor Brownridge responded that the issue had been discussed with Unity who confirmed that the drainage issue was the responsibility of United Utilities. The Council did not have the funding for works that was not its responsibility but would put pressure on United Utilities to discharge their obligation more quickly than five years.

3. Councillor Shuttleworth to Councillor Hibbert:

“Chadderton South residents who live on both sides of Broadway between Hollinwood Avenue and Mough Lane/ Butterworth Lane, and those who live between Mough Lane and the M60 junction, are constantly seeing this stretch of road suffering heavy ponding to such an extent that the footpaths and garden areas are constantly having to be cleared of grit and other debris washed up as a result of passing motor vehicles as a result of the inability of the drainage system to take away the surface water.

Despite continual requests to Highways England to deal with this long standing problem, may I request that the Cabinet Member responsible for Highways ensures that as we head further in to winter that some action is taken to alleviate the problem for these residents until such time as the body responsible provide a long term solution.

Needless to say that this is a real and severe problem for any person travelling this stretch of highway on foot, including the footpath outside the Boat & Horses public house due to a number of blocked gullies.”

Councillor Hibbert responded that he was fully aware of the issues and had discussed this with ward colleagues and one which was raised quite often with Highways England. Highways England were responsible for all elements of the section of road that included the drainage. Members and officers had been working closely with them to try to progress some of the issues raised. Related to the flooding around Stott Road, it had been identified that there was a wider issue in the area. A meeting was to be arranged in the New Year between Highways England (HE), United Utilities and officers for the issue to be progressed. HE were trying to secure funding for resurfacing the full length of Broadway in the next few years and were working on resolving the outstanding drainage issues prior to this work. In the meantime, if there were immediate issues related to flooding, these were to be reported to HE’s contractor. The Cabinet Members had provided the contact details to ward councillors.

#### 4. Councillor Williamson to Councillor Moores:

“On Friday 20 November my colleagues and I received a number of phone calls and messages to say that the alarm at Crompton Pool kept going off. We reported it at 3pm but it was not until 10pm that eventually it stopped. The door had to be broken and the alarm disabled.

I would like to thank Unity, First Response and senior officers at the Council for resolving the situation for the residents living in the vicinity of the pool, on that evening.

However, now that sadly Crompton Pool is going to be demolished in January, and lots of work is going to be done on the site, can we have assurances that if there are any issues in the evenings or over the weekend, they are resolved quicker than this instance?”

Councillor Moores responded that there were a number of call outs on that evening and First Response attended and

addressed the issues with the alarm. First Response would continue to monitor security and would undertake regular checks of the site until the demolition contractor started work in January. Officers would ensure that, in the event of a break in, First Response would respond promptly. In January, the demolition contractor would take responsibility for the site. A letter which contained information about the start date and duration of the works had been circulated to the neighbouring residents and businesses. The letter also contained “anytime” contact details that were to be used for the duration of the works.

5. Councillor S. Bashforth to Councillor Brownridge:

“The heavy rain over the last few weeks has seen two areas in my ward Royton South have seen an increase in flooding over recent years. One is in and around Plumton Clough the other is at the bottom of Valley New Road.

At Plumton Clough we have had our own environment officers and officers from the Environment Agency inspect the site and are told it is the land owners responsibility to deal with the flooding but after repeated attempts to get some action, none has been taken.

At Valley New Road, the flooding seems to be a result of natural springs and underground water courses being overwhelmed by the heavy rain but in both cases I have not been able to get any definitive answers.

If we have to use our powers to force landowners to act then we must do so if we can carry out some works to relive the situation then can we also do so.

Can the cabinet member responsible please help me get some real action taken on both these issues?”

Councillor Brownridge responded that the problem was a suspected blockage of a culvert and it was the responsibility of the riparian owner. The Council were in discussions with representatives and requested the the Council be informed of how they intended to ensure the water level was brought back to pre-2015 levels and were awaiting a response. The Cabinet member would keep ward members informed.

6. Councillor G. Alexander to Councillor Hibbert:

“I am aware that Unity Partnership have had a meeting with Persimmon Construction company to repair snags on the Northgate Estate Moorside.

Could the Cabinet member let us know how soon the work will begin and completed so that after a lengthy 13 years the estate will finally be adopted by the council?”

Councillor Hibbert responded that officers were currently working to rearrange a meeting which Persimmon Homes had failed to attend and were also attempting to negotiate the extent of works required prior to them finally entering into an agreement which would enable the adoption of the roads to follow and gave assurances that this would be done as quickly as possible.





7. Councillor Garry to Councillor Hibbert:

“Sadly too many people flout the traffic regulations outside St. Mary's, Propps Hall and South Failsworth schools and park on the waiting restrictions.

Greater Manchester police have stepped up patrols in these areas and have publicised the results on facebook. What is the council doing to combat this kind of parking that poses a danger to children? Also, may I ask how many fixed penalty notices have been issued to parents who choose to ignore waiting restrictions in these locations?”

Councillor Hibbert responded that this was a borough-wide problem. NSL Limited were employed to enforce traffic management within the borough of Oldham which included the monitoring and control of traffic regulations outside 90 secondary and primary schools. Since September 2015, 129 Penalty Charge Notices had been issued outside schools which demonstrated the Council was reacting to the danger this type of illegal parking posed to children. Since September 2015, 5 visits had been made to the three schools in question and 2 penalty charge notices issued. NSL had been requested to increase their patrols to these specific areas to address the concerns being raised about people parking illegally. He also added that he had received information that the CCTV cars had undertaken a joint operation at St. Mary's school in cooperation with the police.

8. Councillor Harkness to Councillor Akhtar:

“As a ward member I am concerned for the residents I represent that Waterhead Academy has had yet another head teacher resign, which brings yet more upheaval to the school. What is the council doing to ensure that the children attending, and due to attend, the school will receive a decent education?”

Councillor Akhtar responded that he shared Councillor Harkness's concerns. The Council continued to work with the office of the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Department for Education to secure a successful education for children at this school. The recent OFSTED report, which was published on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015, highlighted a number of significant issues faced by the Academy. The Cabinet Member was pleased that the Dean Trust was supporting the school and welcomed the news that local providers were also working with the school. The Local Authority had, on several occasions, noted its concerns about the progress of learners at the school to the DfE and the Regional Schools Commissioner and he was assured that they were taking the appropriate steps to bring about the required improvement at the school.

9. Councillor Ahmad to Councillor Akhtar:

“Parents of pupils attending Clarksfield School are concerned regarding the condition of the school buildings. Over the last 18

months the school has had to be closed on 13 occasions because of repair issues. Pupils have lost 3066 days of education or 5 per cent. Clarksfield School needs replacing urgently.

Could the cabinet member inform me if there any opportunities to achieve government funding to replace this school?"



Councillor Akhtar responded that the Council was still looking for opportunities for funding. School closures were declared by the Headteacher based upon her judgement. When colleagues at Unity Partnership or the Council's Property team had been made aware of issues causing a school closure, they would attend the site to arrange remedial works or to assess and agree the safety of the building to permit the school to be reopened. The Council recognised the school's desire for a new school building and had taken opportunities when they arose to apply for central government grant funding. The Cabinet Member would arrange for a meeting with ward councillors on the concerns that had been raised.

10. Councillor McLaren to Councillor Hibbert:

"Could the Cabinet Member for Transport, please advise us what if any steps are being taken to alleviate the continuing parking problems around the Freehold Metrolink Stop?"

Councillor Hibbert responded that the parking problem at Freehold had been raised with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) who agreed that there was a demand for additional park and ride facilities at Freehold. TfGM had a list of stops on the Metrolink network where this was the case. They had added Freehold to their list of stops at which they would consider future park and ride provision, but any park and ride scheme would be dependent on the availability of funding and land. In the short term the Council would work with TfGM to look at whether there was scope to transfer some of the demand to other Metrolink stops with park and ride provision through a combination of signage and enforcement. The Cabinet Member recommended the park and ride facility at Hollinwood.

11. Councillor Malik to Councillor Hibbert

"For some time now parents have been complaining about the access to Richmond school through Winterbottom Street. This matter was made worse when the Metro link opened. Parents and local residents regularly complain about parking on Winterbottom Street and the fact that there is no turning circle. I am genuinely worried that one day there will be a serious incident.

Can the relevant cabinet member work with the ward councillors to find an urgent solution to this problem?"

Councillor Hibbert responded that he had met with officers and the headteacher of Richmond School to discuss the issues raised and shared these concerns. Although parents were aware of the confined area within Winterbottom Street for

vehicles to enter, manoeuvre and park when dropping off and collecting their children from school, some insisted on using the street which resulted in obstructive parking practices which affected both motorists and pedestrians. There was currently a proposal for the implementation of some parking measures for the reduction of people using the area to park all day for the Metrolink which caused complications for school traffic. It was acknowledged that parents could park on yellow lines at school times but at the least the removal of the vehicles which currently parked all day would make access into the street much easier. The Road Safety team had also carried out training with the pupils to raise their road safety awareness.

12. Councillor Judge to Councillor Hibbert:

“Firbank school in Royton is in serious need of a 20mph zone around it and the surrounding roads. In particular, Grasmere Road has become a busy Rat Run for vehicles of all types. Can the Cabinet member responsible for traffic and road safety please make this school a priority when planning new schemes?”

Councillor Hibbert responded that feedback was always welcomed from local communities regarding the issues in an around where they live. Highlighted road safety concerns held to enhance the ongoing commitment which saw year on year physical engineering measures being deployed as well as road safety education campaigns being delivered in schools throughout the borough.

The traffic management issues around schools could be complex and to that end it was appropriate that appropriate information on traffic speed, traffic movement and associated traffic volume was collected. To that end, the Cabinet Member confirmed that officers would start to look at the issues around this school and when baseline data had been gathered, officers would work with ward members and the school in sharing what information had been gathered, the measures which might be appropriate to be deployed that addressed any issues and how funding could be accessed in the future.

13. Councillor Sedgwick to Councillor Hibbert:

“I want to raise an issue in my ward that I think will affect members in every ward. This relates to properties that has been purchased, partially refurbished and then left unfinished and often neglected for years. Such properties become eyesores and ‘blights’ on their community.

We have two eyesores in my ward the little shop on St John Street and the Temple Bowling Pub on Huddersfield Road. Something needs to be done about them so can I ask the Cabinet Member if and when anything can be done by this Council about these derelict properties? There is also on Lees Road a restaurant or takeaway with a window smashed and was a disgrace.”

Councillor Hibbert responded that officers had worked with the owners of the buildings to secure and tidy the sites. The Council would continue to monitor the situation and ensured owners carried out any work that was deemed necessary under the limited powers at the Council's disposals. The Cabinet Member asked that Councillor Sedgwick provide the details to him and he would provide an update as soon as possible.

At this point in the meeting, the Mayor advised that the time limit for this item had expired.

**RESOLVED** that the questions and the responses provided be noted.

2 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Azad, Hussain, Price and Sheldon.

3 **TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 4TH NOVEMBER 2015 BE SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015 be approved as a correct record.

4 **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY MATTER TO BE DETERMINED AT THE MEETING**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, elected members declared the following interests:

Councillors Dean, Jabbar, McCann, Sykes declared a personal interest in Item 15, Minutes of the Unity Partnership Board by virtue of their appointment to the Board; Councillors Dearden, Fielding, Roberts and Wrigglesworth declared a personal interest in Item 9, Budget Proposals, by virtue of their appointment to the Positive Steps Board; Councillors G. Alexander, Chauhan, Harrison and McCann declared a personal interest in Items 9 and 15, Minutes of the Oldham Care and Support, by virtue of the appointment to the OCS Board. Councillors Dean, Jabbar and McCann declared a personal interest at Item 9 by virtue of their membership of the Joint Venture Unity Board. Councillor Gloster declared a disclosable pecuniary interest at Item 15, minutes of the Police and Crime Panel by virtue of his employment with Greater Manchester Police. Councillors Mushtaq, Ball, Briggs, Hibbert, Chauhan, Ames, Judge, Cosgrove, A. Alexander, Qumer, Shah, G. Alexander, Rehman, and Moores declared a personal interest at Item 8 by virtue of their membership in Unite the Union. Councillors Toor, Wrigglesworth, Salamat, Ali, Chadderton, Fielding and Jabbar declared a personal interest at Item 8 by virtue of their membership in UNISON. Councillor Iqbal declared a personal interest at Item 8 by virtue of his membership of the CWU Union. Councillor Williams declared a personal interest at Item 8 by virtue of his membership in the USDAW Union. Councillors Stretton, S. Bashforth, M. Bashforth, Roberts, Shuttleworth, Dean, Ahmad, Akhtar, Larkin and Shah declared a personal interest at Item 8 by virtue of their

membership in the GMB Union. Councillors Dearden, Harrison, and McLaren declared a personal interest at Item 8 by virtue of their membership in the NUT. Councillor Roberts declared a personal interest at Item 9 by virtue of her consultancy for the Family and Childcare Trust. Councillor Garry declared a personal interest at Item 8 by virtue of her membership in ANGU Trade Union. Councillor McLaren declared a personal interest at Item 8 by virtue of his membership in the League Managers Association (Retired). Councillor Harkness declared a personal interest at Item 8 by virtue of his membership in VOICE the union. Councillor Klonowski declared a personal interest at Item 8 by virtue of his membership in Prospects the Union.

Councillor McMahon declared a pecuniary interest at Item 8 by virtue of his election sponsorship as a UNITE/GMB member. He left the Chamber during this item and took no part in the voting thereon.

Councillor Qumer declared a pecuniary interest at Item 8 by virtue of his election sponsorship from trade unions. He left the Chamber during this item and took no part in the voting thereon.

Councillor Larkin declared a pecuniary interest at Item 8 by virtue of his employment with USDAW. He left the Chamber during this item and took no part in the voting thereon.

Councillor M. Bashforth declared a pecuniary interest at Item 9 by virtue of her employment in a secondary school. She left the Chamber during this item and took no part in the voting thereon.

5 **TO DEAL WITH MATTERS WHICH THE MAYOR  
CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

6 **TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO THE  
BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL**

1. The Mayor made reference to the recent deaths of Honorary Alderman Jack Armitage and Tony Adler. Councillors Harrison, Sykes, Dean, Hibbert and Hudson spoke in remembrance of Alderman Armitage. Councillors Hudson and Heffernan spoke in remembrance of Mr. Adler.

Council held a minute's silence in memory of Honorary Alderman Jack Armitage and Tony Adler.

2. The Mayor also made reference to the recent Parliamentary by-election for Oldham West and Royton whereby Councillor Jim McMahon had been duly elected. On behalf of the Council he offered congratulations to Councillor McMahon on his election as MP.

7 **TO RECEIVE AND NOTE PETITIONS RECEIVED  
RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Mayor advised that one petition had been received for noting by Council:



### Neighbourhoods and Cooperatives

Vehicle Plate Extension Request on behalf of Private Hire Firms and Private Hire Drivers (received 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (391 signatures) (Ref 2015-23)

**RESOLVED** that the petition received since the last meeting of the Council be noted.

8

### **OUTSTANDING BUSINESS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Mayor informed the meeting that there were two items of outstanding business from the previous meeting.

#### Motion 1

Councillor Chadderton MOVED and Councillor S. Bashforth SECONDED the following motion:

“This Council notes with disappointment the passing of the Trade Union Bill at its second reading in Parliament on 14 September 2015.

This Council believes that the Bill represents the most vicious attack on Trade Unions in over 30 years by introducing measures that will make it more difficult for employees to stand up for and defend their rights at work.

Amongst other things the passing of the Bill will introduced:

- The removal of the ability of public sector employees to have Trade Union subscriptions deducted from their salaries.
- A requirement for unions to notify police if they intend to discuss a strike on social media.
- A requirement for police to be notified 14 days in advance of a strike if striking workers intend to use placards or loudspeakers on a picket line.
- The appointment of a ‘picket supervisor’ for each picket who will be required to wear an armband and give their name and contact details to the police and their employer.
- A minimum turnout threshold of 50% in ballots for strike action.

This Council further notes that further human rights groups Liberty, Amnesty International and the British Institute of Human Rights have all condemned the Bill as an attack on the basic right to protest.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has branded this law to be an ‘outdated response that could have potentially counterproductive consequences’.

In Oldham we recognise the importance of Trade Unions and the work they do representing their members. We have a good track record in employee relations such as collective agreement

of single status work. We recognise the importance of liaising with our Trade Unions colleagues and of early engagement.



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Council therefore resolves to:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, Sajid Javid MP, on behalf of the Council setting out our opposition to the Bill and requesting that they use all means available during the Committee stage of the Bill to prevent it from being enacted in its form.
- Ask the Chief Executive to write on behalf of the Council to our local MPs setting out our opposition to the Bill and requesting that they use all means available during the Committee stage of the Bill to prevent it from being enacted in its current form.

## AMENDMENT

Councillor Harkness MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED the following amendment:

“Insert as a new second paragraph:

‘Council notes that the Conservatives sought to introduce similar legislation during the last Parliament and that this legislation was blocked at the onset because of opposition from the Liberal Democrats in the Coalition Government.’

Insert as a third bullet point at the end of the motion:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Leaders of the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties asking them to agree to repeal this legislation should one or both of them form a Government in the future.”

Amended motion to read:

This Council notes with disappointment the passing of the Trade Union Bill at its second reading in Parliament on 14 September 2015.

Council notes that the Conservatives sought to introduce similar legislation during the last Parliament and that this legislation was blocked at the onset because of opposition from the Liberal Democrats in the Coalition Government.

This Council believes that the Bill represents the most vicious attack on Trade Unions in over 30 years by introducing measures that will make it more difficult for employees to stand up for and defend their rights at work.

Amongst other things the passing of the Bill will introduce:

- The removal of the ability of public sector employees to have Trade Union subscriptions deducted from their salaries.
- A requirement for unions to notify police if they intend to discuss a strike on social media.

- A requirement for police to be notified 14 days in advance of a strike if striking workers intend to use placards or loudspeakers on a picket line.
- The appointment of a 'picket supervisor' for each picket who will be required to wear an armband and give their name and contact details to the police and their employer.
- A minimum turnout threshold of 50% in ballots for strike action.

This Council further notes that further human rights groups Liberty, Amnesty International and the British Institute of Human Rights have all condemned the Bill as an attack on the basic right to protest.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has branded this law to be an 'outdated response that could have potentially counterproductive consequences'.

In Oldham we recognise the importance of Trade Unions and the work they do representing their members. We have a good track record in employee relations such as collective agreement of single status work. We recognise the importance of liaising with our Trade Unions colleagues and of early engagement.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, Sajid Javid MP, on behalf of the Council setting out our opposition to the Bill and requesting that they use all means available during the Committee stage of the Bill to prevent it from being enacted in its form.
- Ask the Chief Executive to write on behalf of the Council to our local MPs setting out our opposition to the Bill and requesting that they use all means available during the Committee stage of the Bill to prevent it from being enacted in its current form.
- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Leaders of the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties asking them to agree to repeal this legislation should one or both of them form a Government in the future."

Councillor Chadderton exercised her right of reply.

Councillor Harkness exercised his right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT.

On being put the VOTE ELEVEN were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with FORTY VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENSIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

A vote was then taken on the MOTION.

On being put the vote the MOTION was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**RESOLVED that:**



1. The Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, Sajid Javid MP, on behalf of the council setting out the Council's opposition to the Bill.
2. The Chief Executive write on behalf of the Council to our local MPs setting out our opposition to the Bill and requesting that they use all means available during the Committee stage of the Bill to prevent it from being enacted in its current form.

**NOTE:** Councillors McMahon, A. Alexander, G. Alexander, Larkin and Qumer left the room during this item and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

### Motion 2

It was MOVED by Councillor Dearden that this item of business be WITHDRAWN. This Motion had been submitted under Administration Business.

9

### **BUDGET PROPOSALS 2016/17 & 2017/18**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Finance which presented the detailed Tranche 2 budget reduction proposals for the financial year 2016/17. The proposal included five of the Tranche 1 budget reduction proposals noted at the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015 Council meeting for which the consultation process had concluded and a formal decision could be made. This was prior to the receipt of the Local Government Finance Settlement and other information which would impact on budget decisions. Further detailed budget proposals would be presented to Council on 24 February 2016.

These proposals built upon the work that had already been undertaken in previous financial years to address budget challenges and ensured continued financial stability for the Council.

Councillor McCann spoke in support of the Budget Proposals.

Councillor Akhtar spoke in support of the Budget Proposals.

Councillor Bates spoke on the Budget Proposals.

Councillor Sykes spoke in support of the Budget Proposals.

Councillor Mushtaq spoke in support of the Budget Proposals.

Councillor Dean spoke in support of the Budget Proposals.

Councillor McMahon exercised his right of reply and spoke in support of the Budget Proposals.

On being put to the vote FIFTY-FIVE VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the MOTION with ONE VOTE AGAINST and NO ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

### **RESOLVED that:**

1. The Tranche 1 budget reduction proposals of £2.036m, for which all consultation stages had been completed as set out in Appendix 2 and detailed at Appendix 3, be approved.

2. The Tranche 2 budget reduction proposals of £2.957m, for which all consultation stages had been completed as set out in Appendix 5 and detailed at Appendix 6, be approved.
3. The Tranche 2 budget proposals of £1.094m for which the conclusion of consultation was yet to be concluded as set out in Appendix 7 and detailed at Appendix 8, be noted.
4. The Tranche 1 budget reduction proposals of £1.343m for which not all the consultation stages had yet concluded and would be considered in the January / February cycle of budget meetings be noted.
5. Consideration was given to the information contained within the Equality Impact Assessments included at Appendices 3, 6 and 8 which supported the Tranche 1 and 2 proposals for approval and Tranche 2 for noting.
6. The budget reduction target may need to be revised dependent on the future Government funding and policy announcements which included the Provisional and Final Local Government Finance Settlements for 2016/17.

10

#### **YOUTH COUNCIL**

There were no items submitted by the Youth Council.

11

#### **LEADER AND CABINET QUESTION TIME**

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Sykes, raised the following two questions:

##### Question 1 – Closure of Oldham Tax Office

“My first question tonight concerns the proposed closure of the Oldham HMRC Tax Office at Phoenix House on Union Street. This move will represent a massive job loss for Oldham and a further blow to our Borough’s public sector, following on top of this Government’s proposal to close both of our court houses and the significant cuts in local government spending announced recently in the Chancellor’s Autumn Statement. The Government is proposing to close dozens of other local HMRC tax offices and consolidate their operations in large regional offices in Manchester and twelve other cities across the regions.

Such a move makes no financial sense – Manchester’s office rentals are second only to London, whilst Oldham’s are well under half the price.

Public contact with HMRC is largely online or via email or the telephone, rather than by personal visit, therefore there is no need to locate these offices to busy and expensive, cities.

Rather common sense suggests that to save money this Government should attend choose to expand the Oldham operation into a new regional centre and migrate Civil Service jobs into our Borough.

Sites like Union Street (next to the Town Centre Metrolink stop) and Hollinwood Junction (adjacent to the motorway network and the Hollinwood tram stop) are easily accessible for staff and could represent alternative affordable locations.



**Oldham**  
Council

This is the approach taken in London where HMRC are regionalising to Croydon and Stratford, rather than central London.

Can I therefore ask the Leader if he will join me in writing to the Chancellor and the Head of HMRC offering to work with them to bring a new regional centre to Oldham and the many new jobs that will come with it?"

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, responded that he was suspicious about who was acting in Oldham's interest. There had not been any discussions with Leaders in Greater Manchester about the court services being cut or about HMRC moving out of town. There were people taking advantage of rationalisation under the cloak of austerity. It made no sense to take prime office location in Manchester. There had been no overview by Government and there was a need for a transparent assessment to be done. He agreed of the need to make a direct representation. The Leader was happy to facilitate a meeting whether through his role as Council Leader or as one of the MPs.

#### Question 2 – Wilshaw Report

"For my second question, I would like to return to a subject on which I have consistently expressed concern – namely the education of the children of this Borough.

Like any parent, I place the education of my children up at the top of my personal priorities, so like many parents in this Borough I was extremely disappointed to hear that the Head of Ofsted, Sir Michael Wilshaw, recently announced that Oldham was one of sixteen authorities where less than 60% of our children are studying at a 'good' or 'excellent' school.

This damning admission means that almost half of all of our children are being failed by some of our schools and this Administration and this is attested to in recent announcements about examination grades.

Parents have the right to expect that education will be of a quality that will allow their children to reach their full potential. Why is it that we as an education authority continue to fail our young people? I would like to ask the Leader what is being done to address this Oldham education 'gap' and why there continues to be a delay in the publication of the findings and recommendations of the much-awaited Oldham Education Commission? This so call Commission will have cost council tax payers more than £100,000 and yet it is still to see the light of day.

We needed to start work to improve the education for our young people months or years ago, rather than keep hiding behind this much promised report. Now that the Oldham West and Royton by-election is out of the way, surely there can be no further justification for any further delay – why can't we see it now? And why can we not start to improve the lot for our children now!"

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, responded that he had been handed the draft report. Publication would take place

in the new year. It was not only about writing the report but putting the foundations in place for a new approach in Oldham, which included partnership and dealing with a complex education system. There was a cost, however, there were 57,000 children in Oldham which was less than 2 pounds per child for the Commission cost and this was a good investment. He referred to the point that under the Liberal Democrat Administration the number of school improvement officers had been reduced from 40 to 2. He recognised that education was in a mess and, as a parent, this was not good enough. The day of excuses were gone, if schools could not improve and lacked leadership and more than enough time had gone, the Council would go in and take action if the school was under local authority control or work with the Regional Schools Commissioner if not. The performance of primary schools was good. Fundamental issues would have to be put right, it was not about blame but to take action where required and make education everybody's business.

The Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor John Hudson, asked the following question to the Leader:

Councillor Hudson referred to Hotel Future and asked where plans were up to with Hotel Future with funding and sponsorship as it had gone quiet on that project and it was an integral part of modernising the town. Could the Leader explain where the Council was up to with the project?

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, thanked Councillor Hudson for his support of the regeneration projects. There was a need for a decent hotel in Oldham, the offer in the town centre was non-existent. This would also encourage trade to the QE Hall. Cabinet had agreed to pursue Hotel Future. Further financial information was being assessed as well as investigations into external funding, as other people would need to come to the table and the Government should contribute. The Leader wanted to ensure the project was getting value for money for the taxpayer and others make a contribution.

The Mayor reminded the meeting that Council had agreed that, following the Leaders' allocated questions, questions would be taken in an order which reflected the political balance of the Council.

1. Councillor Malik to Councillor Hibbert:

"Will the relevant Cabinet Member report upon recent claims for compensation that have been lodged by drivers as a result of damage to their car due to the poor state of the roads in Oldham over the past three years? What amount of compensation that has been paid to the successful claimants?"

Councillor Hibbert responded that for the past four financial years the numbers of claims had reduced and that more claims were being defended by the Council due to the improved repair and inspection regime. In 2012/13 there had been 272 claims,

in 2014/15 there had been 77 claims and to date in 2015/16 there had been 37 claims. In terms of the amounts paid out, there was also a significant reduction in the amount being paid out, in 2012/13 £41,286.99 had been paid out; in 2014/15 £8,582.17 had been paid out and to date in 2015/16 £3,460.36 had been paid out. Drivers had a six year time limit in which to bring a claim for property damage against the Council, so these figures were subject to change. This proved that the technique, strategy and programme for the highways and transport system had improved beyond recognition, the Highways Department was the best in Manchester and the Cabinet Member was proud of them.

2. Councillor Roberts to Councillor Brownridge:

“A recent study by the Local Government Association has found that the cost of paupers' funerals to local authorities has increased by 30% in the past four years to a total of £1.7m and the number of such funerals by 11%. The report also found that the highest number of pauper's funerals take place in the north west. Can the relevant Cabinet Member inform us of the level, cost and trend in pauper's funerals in Oldham and does she agree with me that the national trend is another shameful result of the austerity policies pursued by the Conservative Government?”

Councillor Brownridge responded that there had been an increase in the figures, the number was not high but the trend was clear. In 2010, there had been 9 funerals costing £9,441, in 2014 there were 19 funerals costing £23,903. From 2010 to 2014 the number of funerals had increased by 90%. The costs associated with these funerals increased by 153%. There was no explanation for the trend, but austerity measures were a logical conclusion.

3. Councillor G. Alexander to Councillor Brownridge

“Greater Manchester Police have advertised on social media about the penalties for dog owners who allow their dogs to foul and not clean up after them. This seems to be a Borough wide problem, does the cabinet member agree that we should use this advert as a Borough wide leaflet to inform the public of the consequences of dog fouling. Would it be possible to place more bins around the borough?”

Councillor Brownridge responded that officers had been asked to liaise with the police to bring together approach with that of the ‘Love Where you Live’ campaign. A survey of all bins would be undertaken with District Executives involved in the next few weeks.

4. Councillor Blyth to Councillor Alexander:

“The demise of Our House after the investment of so much Council officer time and over £100K Council tax payer money is a body blow to one of this Labour Council's pet projects.

This prominent empty building represents failure and is now a blight on the Market, surely deterring trade and being demoralising for market traders; most importantly, Our House staff have been laid off.

Can I ask the Cabinet Member what the Council is doing to re-let the empty building and, most importantly, helping staff, who have lost their jobs as a result of this farrago, to find meaningful, sustained alternate employment?"

Councillor Akhtar responded that at present the administrator still held the lease for this property and therefore the Council was not currently advertising this property for lettings. However, when queries were received regarding leasing the property these were passed to the administrator and the information was retained on record should the property revert back to the Council. In the short term the administrator remained as lessee which removed the risk to the Council of becoming liable for vacant business rates. Our House was about offering a fairer way for Oldham residents and it was procured and delivered on the Council's behalf by FRC Group who worked hard to make this work in what remained challenging economic times. As for supporting the staff, the Get Oldham Working Campaign worked hard as a job brokerage service which found opportunities and had supported over 2,600 residents into work. The agreement was that when redundancies were noted that this was handled by a specialist team within Job Centre Plus who co-ordinated the response that included working with Get Oldham Working. This had been the agreed process and ensured that those affected received the right advice and support at the right time. The £100,000 figure was not accurate.

5. Councillor Fielding to Councillor Shah:

"Can the relevant cabinet member please advise whether there is a cost saving for the Council if residents access their Council services online as opposed to face to face at Customer Services. If there is indeed a saving to be had, what is Oldham Council doing to encourage and support more residents to interact with the Council through online methods?"

Councillor Shah responded that a re-occurring saving of £209,000 had been achieved through a customer transformation programme. The Council had gone on-line with benefits and council tax applications and payment by direct debit. A major supplier change was underway and expected to be formalised in February. All customer channels were being reviewed with an ability to track performance. An online team was available for those residents who required further support. No further savings had been identified but there was potential to support delivery of savings through the online services.

6. Councillor McLaren to Councillor Akhtar:

"The Radclyffe School was recently judged outstanding by OFSTED, we now have 2 outstanding secondary schools in Oldham the other being the Blue Coat School. Can the Cabinet

Member please assure me that the best practise exemplified by these two schools is being shared with other schools in the borough?"



**Oldham**  
Council

Councillor Akhtar responded that this had been a fantastic month with the Lifelong Learning being awarded outstanding, the Radclyffe School and Corpus Christi Primary school had been awarded outstanding. He gave his thanks to all the staff. Blue Coat School had been judged as outstanding since 2010. The expertise of both schools was being used across the Borough. The Council funded Blue Coat to lead on several topics as well as Radclyffe who led on Mathematics. The Blue Coat school was also a national support school. In addition to the work that the Council directly funded, the Council were supporting peer review arrangements between schools that help spread good practice. The Council were also providing a means of schools sharing data to help identify strengths and areas of need across all schools. The same approach applied among primary schools where there were 17 outstanding schools. Many of these were commissioned by the Council to lead on different aspects of work and many outstanding and good schools had helped schools that were previously "requiring improvement" to become good or outstanding themselves. The borough also had two outstanding Special Schools. The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to congratulate the staff and governors of Radclyffe and all our outstanding schools on the work they did for the borough and congratulated all schools that had been inspected by Ofsted this term for their excellent outcomes.

7. Councillor Dean to Councillor Hibbert:

"The government are moving an amendment to the Housing and Planning Bill. This amendment would mean all new tenants of socially rented homes both council and housing association would have a 5 year contract. They then would be expected to move on to private rented home or become an owner occupier after this time. The Government are refusing to give exceptions for the disabled or families with young children.

Could the cabinet member assure me he will be making representations both to the government and local MPs opposing this amendment; which would cause great hardship to many tenants."

Councillor Hibbert responded that he understood that the Government was planning to stop social landlords offering lifetime tenancies. Many housing providers had introduced fixed term tenancies for new tenants as a means of making best use of their existing stock. This was particularly the case for extra care, sheltered and adapted housing or larger family homes. The housing providers who currently operated this approach reviewed the circumstances of the tenants nearing the end of the fixed period. In most cases, this meant extension of the fixed term tenancy. If tenants no longer have a need for that type of accommodation, the housing provider would work with the tenant on alternative suitable housing. The Cabinet Member

hoped that the Government would not automatically consider moving tenants into owner occupation or the private rented sector after 5 years and would make serious, determined representations if that were the case. It was ironic that many privately rented homes were previously right to buy homes which had fallen to rogue landlords which the Council was addressing.

8. Councillor Murphy to Councillor Hibbert

“Firstly can I thank my opposite number Cllr Dave Hibbert Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Highways for allowing me the opportunity to be involved in the three year capital improvement programme, which I felt was very fair to all wards.

Whilst I have seen for myself the massive task in highway improvements the council has for the future, could I please ask that at the earliest possible moment the council moves the works planned at the Fraser Street/Church Road/Rochdale Road junction in both Shaw and Crompton forward from Year 2 which is 2016-17 to even sooner.

Shaw and Crompton elected members day by day grow increasingly concerned at the possibility of another accident similar to that at the Milnrow Road crossing and fear that it is just a matter of time.

The local District Executive has written to reiterate the request but a commitment from the Cabinet Member and Council would go a long way in terms of reassurances.”

Councillor Hibbert responded that although the proposals at the Fraser Street / Church Road / Rochdale Road junction had been planned to be delivered during year 2 of the three year programme (2017/18), provision had been made to undertake elements of Preliminary Design, in advance. This initial activity was intended to help to smooth out the overall delivery of the three year Programme by potentially “slotting-in” future years’ schemes to replace earlier projects that may have been re-profiled / re-scheduled owing to unforeseen circumstances at their initial feasibility stage. With this in mind, in year one, the intention was to carry out an element of Preliminary Design for the junction and, if the opportunity arose for the reasons discussed above, the case would be made to bring the works forward.

At this point in the meeting the Mayor advised that the time limit for this item had expired.

**RESOLVED** that the questions asked and responses provided by noted.



**OBSERVATIONS ON ANY ITEMS WITHIN THE MINUTES FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE CABINET, AND RECEIVE RESPONSES FROM CABINET MEMBERS**



The Cabinet minutes for the meetings held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and the draft minutes of the Cabinet (Budget) meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015 were submitted.

Members made the following observations:

1. Councillor Murphy, Cabinet Meeting - 16 November 2015, page 431, Item 7 – Creation of Digital Enterprise Hub in Oldham Town Centre and he commented on the good direction taken and hoped for sufficient progress and that it was managed properly.

Councillor McMahon responded that this had been developed by Oldhamers with O2 and Wyrea. It was managed similarly to schemes in London and Madrid and was pleased to say that this was the only scheme in the UK outside London.

2. Councillor Harkness, Cabinet meeting – 19 October 2015, page 426, Item 11 – Proposed Development of Replacement Saddleworth School – Allocation of Resources and he congratulated the Cabinet on the agreement of funding of additional works to the new school.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015 be noted.
2. The observations and responses on the Cabinet minutes be noted.

13

**NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS**

Motion 1

Councillor Deaden MOVED and Councillor Roberts SECONDED the following motion:

“Oldham Council notes with concern the continuing conflicts in the Middle East and Africa which are driving the current refugee crisis, particularly people fleeing war and persecution from Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Iraq. We welcome the Government’s commitment to provide asylum for 4,000 people this year from the Syrian refugee camps but believe that as a country the United Kingdom can do more. Oldham has provided sanctuary and a new start for traumatised refugees in the past and calls on the Government to support Oldham and other councils to do more now.

Oldham’s refugee community includes approximately 160 destitute asylum seekers currently supported by a network of community organisations, friends, family and volunteers. Their

position will be made worse by proposed reductions in financial support, particularly for women and children.

The Council welcomes the work done by individuals, community groups and religious groups in supporting asylum seekers and asks the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods to convene a meeting of those supporting refugees and Asylum Seekers in Oldham with the aim of developing an ongoing network and provide support to make the best use of all the work done already in the borough

The Council supports the efforts by AGMA to get a proper support system in place, including reviewing the role played by SERCO in administering asylum seeker support.

Oldham Council calls on the Government to put in place a properly funded and fair system including: fair allocation of refugees across the UK; long term funding for Councils; quick and accurate decision making about the status of refugees; better effort to support and integrate refugees (e.g. providing English as a Second Language teaching and investment in conversion of qualifications to UK standard); better administration of welfare benefits and investment in public services where needed.

Council also resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to:

1. Write to the Local Government Association to enlist their support in improving support for Asylum Seekers
2. Write to the boroughs 3 MPs to inform them of the council's position and request that they use whatever parliamentary means available to raise this matter with government"

#### AMENDMENT

Councillor Turner MOVED and Councillor Williamson SECONDED the following amendment:

"Insert at the end of the third paragraph a comma and then the following wording "including supporting humanitarian efforts initiated in this borough to alleviate the suffering and poverty of people living in conflict zones".

Amended Motion to Read:

Oldham Council notes with concern the continuing conflicts in the Middle East and Africa which are driving the current refugee crisis, particularly people fleeing war and persecution from Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Iraq. We welcome the Government's commitment to provide asylum for 4,000 people this year from the Syrian refugee camps but believe that as a country the United Kingdom can do more. Oldham has provided sanctuary and a new start for traumatised refugees in the past and calls on the Government to support Oldham and other councils to do more now.

Oldham's refugee community includes approximately 160 destitute asylum seekers currently supported by a network of community organisations, friends, family and volunteers. Their position will be made worse by proposed reductions in financial support, particularly for women and children.

The Council welcomes the work done by individuals, community groups and religious groups in supporting asylum seekers and asks the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods to convene a meeting of those supporting refugees and Asylum Seekers in Oldham with the aim of developing an ongoing network and provide support to make the best use of all the work done already in the borough, including supporting humanitarian efforts initiated in this borough to alleviate the suffering and poverty of people living in conflict zones”.

The Council supports the efforts by AGMA to get a proper support system in place, including reviewing the role played by SERCO in administering asylum seeker support.

Oldham Council calls on the Government to put in place a properly funded and fair system including: fair allocation of refugees across the UK; long term funding for Councils; quick and accurate decision making about the status of refugees; better effort to support and integrate refugees (e.g. providing English as a Second Language teaching and investment in conversion of qualifications to UK standard); better administration of welfare benefits and investment in public services where needed.

Council also resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to:

1. Write to the Local Government Association to enlist their support in improving support for Asylum Seekers
2. Write to the borough MPs to inform them of the council's position and request that they use whatever parliamentary means available to raise this matter with government

Councillor Dearden exercised her right of reply and accepted the AMENDMENT.

A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT.

On being put the VOTE FIFTY-FOUR VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with TWO VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENSIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore CARRIED.

Councillor Hudson spoke on the motion.

Councillor Chauhan spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Mushtaq spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Dearden exercised her right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the SUBSTANTIVE MOTION.

On being put the VOTE FIFTY-FIVE were cast in FAVOUR of the SUBSTANTIVE motion with ONE VOTE cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENSIONS. The SUBSTANTIVE MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The Chief Executive write to the Local Government Association to enlist their support in improving support for Asylum Support.

2. The Chief Executive write to the borough MPs to inform them of the Council's position and request that use whatever means available to raise this matter with government.

### Motion 2

The Mayor informed the meeting that the time limit for this item had expired and Councillor Hibbert, as Mover of the Motion, requested Council to permit the following Motion to be rolled over for discussion at the next Council meeting:

“This council notes that:

- That the Housing and Planning Bill has been consulted on and will be debated in Parliament and, if passed, it would threaten the provision of affordable homes for rent and purchase by:  
Forcing 'high-value' council homes to be sold on the open market;  
Extending the right-to-buy to housing association tenants;  
Undermining section 106 requirements on private developers to provide affordable homes.
- There is no commitment in the Bill that affordable homes will be replaced like-for-like in the local area.
- That whilst measures to help first-time buyers are welcome, the 'starter homes' proposals in the Bill will be unaffordable to families and young people on ordinary incomes in most parts of the country; will not preserve the taxpayer investment; and will be built at the expense of genuinely-affordable homes to rent and buy.
- That the Bill undermines localism by taking 32 new wide and open-ended powers for the Secretary over councils and local communities, including the ability to over-ride local plans; to mandate rents for social tenants; and to impose a levy on stock-holding councils, violating the terms of the housing revenue account self-financing deal.
- That the Bill, whilst introducing some welcome measures to address issues relating to rogue landlords, does not help with the high rents, poor conditions and insecurity affecting many of England's 11m private renters, including one in four families with children, and does nothing to help to arrest the recent rise in homelessness.

Oldham Council is already working with partners to use its land and skills to bring forward new housing in the Borough. The Government's 'one size fits all' approach to Planning and Housing doesn't work for areas like Oldham and Greater Manchester.

This council resolves to contact Cllr. Sue Derbyshire, Chair of Greater Manchester Planning and Housing Commission, suggesting that GM should contact the Housing Minister to request a discussion with the Government on the challenges we face and how they can assist us in bringing forward more difficult housing sites.”

**RESOLVED** that the Motion be rolled forward and considered at the Council meeting to be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016.

## **NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS**

### Motion 1

Councillor Williamson **MOVED** and Councillor Gloster **SECONDED** the following motion:

Council notes that nine local authorities are currently working through partnership agreements with the NHS Blood and Transplant Service to increase the number of blood donors and / or registered organ donors among their staff and residents. These agreements have included local authorities making a commitment to:

- Promoting blood and organ donation through digital communication as well as hosting stalls at public events and publishing features in Council produced magazines
- Recruiting staff volunteers to act as 'Donation Champions' to help spread the message of donation across the borough. The volunteers, who received special training, attend events and seek networking opportunities, promoting donation to target hard-to-reach groups
- Providing venues free of charge to the service to take blood donations and free parking to donors whenever possible

This Council recognises the value of becoming a partner to the NHS Blood and Transplant Service in order to increase the number of staff and local residents signed up to be blood and organ donors.

Council therefore resolves to ask the Director of Public Health and the relevant Cabinet Member(s) to:

- Work to secure such an agreement with the NHS Blood and Transplant Service
- Ensure that the recruitment of 'Donation Champions' through the Council's Employee Supported Volunteering programme form part of the agreement
- Bring back a further report to Council on this matter reporting progress

### **AMENDMENT**

Councillor Wrigglesworth **MOVED** and Councillor Fielding **SECONDED** the following **AMENDMENT**:

"Delete:

Council therefore resolves to ask the Director of Public Health and relevant Cabinet Members to: Work to secure such an agreement with the NHS Blood and transplant Services

Ensure that the recruitment of "Donation Champion" through the Council's Employee Supported Volunteering Programme form part of the agreement

Bring back a further report to Council on this matter reporting progress.

Insert: Council therefore resolves to refer the issue to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration.

Motion 1 to then read:

Council notes that nine local authorities are currently working through partnership agreements with the NHS Blood and transplant Services to increase the number of blood donors and /or registered organ donors among their staff and residents. These agreements have included local authorities making a commitment to:

- Promoting blood and organ donation through digital communication as well as hosting stalls at public events and publishing features in Council produced magazines.
  - Recruiting staff volunteers to act as “Donation Champions” to help spread the message of donation across the borough. The volunteers who received special training, attend events and seek networking opportunities, promoting donation to target hard-to-reach groups.
  - Providing venues free of charge to the services to take blood donations and free parking to donors whenever possible.
- This Council recognises the value of becoming a partner to the NHS Blood and Transplant Services in order to increase the number of staff and local residents signed up to be blood and organ donors.

Council therefore resolves to refer the issue to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration.”

Councillor Williamson exercised her right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT.

On being put the VOTE FORTY-FOUR VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with 12 VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENSIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore CARRIED.

A vote was then taken on the SUBSTANTIVE MOTION.

On being put the vote the SUBSTANTIVE MOTION was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

## Motion 2

Councillor Sykes MOVED and Councillor Blyth SECONDED the following motion:

“Council notes that:

- Every 15 minutes, someone in the UK starts to lose their sight.
- According to data from the Royal National Institute for the Blind (the RNIB) there are approximately 6,000 people in Oldham living with some degree of sight loss, and this figure is expected to rise to nearly 9,000 by 2030.
- Obstacles in the public realm such as:
  - Inaccessible crossings;
  - Vehicles parking on pavements;
  - Advertising boards (A-boards);
  - Street and cafe furniture;

- Wheeled bins and refuse bags; and
- Overgrown shrubs and trees, and overhanging branches impede access and mobility, and represent hazards, for the two million people in the UK who suffer from sight loss.
- In a Royal National Institute for the Blind survey conducted in 2014 nearly every respondent with sight loss reported that they had collided with an obstacle in the street within the previous three months, and a third of people reported injury as a result.

Council therefore welcomes the 'Who Put That There!' campaign by the Royal National Institute for the Blind and endorses the call to local authorities to engage with blind and partially sighted people in their area to develop a Street Charter to remove obstacles and hazards from the public realm.

Council therefore resolves to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Board to convene a workshop with representatives from the Royal National Institute for the Blind, blind and partially sighted people living in this borough, and their local representative bodies, and highways and planning officers to draw up a Street Charter for this borough.”

Councillor Wigglesworth MOVED and Councillor Chadderton SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

“Delete: ...to convene a workshop with representatives from the Royal National institute for the blind, blind and partially sighted people living in this borough and their local representative bodies and highways and planning officers to draw up a Street Charter for this borough.

Insert: ... to consider the proposal.

Motion to then read:

Council notes that

- Every 15 minutes someone in the UK starts to lose their sight.
- According to data from the Royal National institute for the Blind (RNIB) there are approximately 6,000 people in Oldham living with some degree of sight loss and this figure is expected to rise to nearly 9,000 by 2030.
- Obstacles in the public realm such as:
  - Inaccessible crossings
  - Vehicles parking on pavements
  - Advertising boards (A –boards)
  - Street and café furniture
  - Wheeled bins and refuge bags and
  - Overgrown shrubs and trees , and overhanging branches

Impede access and mobility and, represent hazards, for the two million people in the UK who suffer from sight loss.

- In a Royal National Institute for the Blind survey conducted in 2014 nearly every respondent with sight loss reported that they had collided with an obstacle in the street

within the previous three months, and a third of people reported injury as a result.

Council therefore welcomes the “Who Put That There” campaign by the Royal National Institute for the Blind and endorses the call to local authorities to engage with blind and partially sighted people in the area to develop a Street Charter to remove obstacles and hazards from the public realm. Council therefore resolves to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Board to consider the proposal. “



A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT.

On being put the VOTE FORTY-FOUR VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with 12 VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENSIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore CARRIED.

A vote was then taken on the SUBSTANTIVE MOTION.

On being put the vote the SUBSTANTIVE MOTION was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

### Motion 3

Councillor Blyth MOVED and Councillor Harkness SECONDED the following motion:

“Council notes:

- The launch last month of the Equality for Mental Health Campaign by former Care Minister Norman Lamb MP, Alastair Campbell and Andrew Mitchell MP
- That this campaign has been endorsed by parliamentarians of all parties, by health and other professionals, religious leaders, and celebrities
- That the campaign seeks to persuade Government to improve the treatment available to patients with mental ill health by:
  - Ensuring parity in treatment for patients with mental health conditions to those with physical health conditions
  - Increasing investment in mental health services
  - Providing such patients with mental health conditions with the same rights to timely access to treatment as those with physical health problems
  - Reducing the stigma attached to mental ill-health

This Council resolves to:

- Support the campaign by asking the Chief Executive to add the name of the Council to the list of signatories



- Ask the Chief Executive to write to our three local Members of Parliament asking them to support this campaign”



A vote was then taken on the MOTION.

On being put the vote the MOTION was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- (a) To note the Minutes of the following Joint Authority meetings and the relevant spokespersons to respond to questions from Members

The minutes of the Joint Authorities were submitted as follows:

Transport for Greater Manchester	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	25 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
Joint GMCA/AGMA Executive	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
2015	25 <sup>th</sup> September
Police and Crime Panel	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
2015	26 <sup>th</sup> June 2015
National Park Authority	25 <sup>th</sup> September
2015	18 <sup>th</sup> September
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority	2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2015
	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2015

There were no questions or observations.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Joint Authorities as detailed in the report be noted.

- (b) To note the Minutes of the following Partnership meetings and the relevant spokespersons to respond to questions from Members

Minutes of Partnership Meetings were submitted as follows:

Unity Partnership Board	2 <sup>nd</sup> September
2015	
Health and Wellbeing Board	15 <sup>th</sup> September
2015	
Oldham Care and Support	5 <sup>th</sup> October 2015

There were no questions or observations.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Partnerships as detailed in the report be noted.

Consideration was given to a report which noted the outcome of the hearing undertaken by the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee in respect of a complaint against Councillor Bates.

The Standards Hearing Sub-Committee had resolved to report its findings to Council and also recommended to Council that Councillor Bates be censured.

Councillor Chadderton as the Chair of the Standards Sub-Committee MOVED the report and Councillor Williams SECONDED.

Councillor Williamson spoke on the report.  
Councillor McMahon spoke on the report.

On being put to the vote FORTY-THREE were cast IN FAVOUR of the MOTION with NO VOTES AGAINST and TWELVE ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. the findings of the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee be noted.
2. Councillor Bates be censured.

16

**CIVIC APPRECIATION NOMINATION**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal Services which sought approval of the nomination to receive the Civic Appreciate Award, in recognition of service and dedication to the local community. The Oldham Deputy Lieutenants Committee had nominated and Group Leaders have recommended that Mrs. Freda Millet received this award.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. Freda Millet be the agreed nomination to receive the Civic Appreciation Award 2016.
2. The ceremony for the award would take place at the Council meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016.

17

**STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Consideration was given to report for the adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as Council policy. The SCI set out how the Council would involve the community in the preparation and the revision of Local Plan documents and the consideration of planning applications. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required local planning authorities prepare an SCI. The SCI also formed part of the Local Plan.

Oldham Council first adopted its SCI in April 2007. It was then reviewed in 2010 which took account of changes to the national planning guidance published in the Planning Policy Statement 12 in 2008. Since then there had been further changes to national planning guidance and it was appropriate that the SCI be reviewed to reflect those changes. In addition, the ten

Greater Manchester authorities had agreed to produce a joint Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Plan Document (GMSF). This SCI set out how the community and other stakeholders would be involved in the preparation of the joint GMSF.



**RESOLVED** that the Statement of Community Involvement be adopted as Council policy.

18

### **GAMBLING POLICY**

Consideration was given to a report which outlined the revised Gambling Policy. The Gambling Act 2005 created a new system of licensing and regulation for commercial gambling. The act gave local authorities new and extended responsibilities for licensing premises for gambling and associated permissions. The current policy had been adopted in January 2012 and had to be reviewed every three years. The policy proposed amendments since the policy was last approved which were outlined in the report. A number of changes had been made to the Operator's Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice by the Gambling Commission which had been reflected in the review.

**RESOLVED** that the Gambling Policy be adopted from January 2016.

19

### **OLDHAM FAIRNESS COMMISSION: A FORMAL RESPONSE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Oldham Fairness Commission which had been published in March 2015. The Oldham Fairness Commission had been set up in July 2013 to identify and address contributions to local inequalities in education, employment and income and to define action which addressed these issues through local partners and beyond. The Commission had brought together a range of evidence and expert witnesses which investigated inequalities under four themes which were education, employment, income and between different population groups.

In respect of the Commission's recommendations, the current activity underway to tackle issues of fairness was recognised within the report and commitment remained to ensure that focus was on getting a fair deal for Oldham residents. The recent refresh of the Council's Corporate Plan, which had been approved in May 2015, restated the commitment to a number of areas outlined by the Commission.

The importance of partnership working was highlighted in the reduction of inequalities. The current work being done through the Oldham Leadership Board and the partnership clusters was recognised and instrumental in taking forward work aimed at the achievement of shared priorities.

There were a number of national policy and system issues the Council asked the Chair of the Fairness Commission, Debbie Abrahams MP, to take up with Government which were:

1. The Council asks the Government to ensure Welfare to Work Programmes do more to close the gap in areas of high deprivation.

2. The Council asks the Government to review skills funding and consider the impact that the current funding arrangements are having in deprived areas.
3. This Council would ask Government to review the data it collects and work with local authorities to construct a dataset which will enable councils to develop targeted help to those most in need.
4. The Council asked Debbie Abrahams MP to write to the Prudential Regulatory Authority (PRA) to highlight the difficulties that some of these changes will present and the threat that they may pose to the availability of finance to those most in need.

**RESOLVED** that the formal response to the report of the Oldham Fairness Commission be approved.

20

**UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Legal Services which informed members of actions that had been taken following previous Council meetings and provided feedback on other issues raised at the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 9.39 pm