

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

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

1            **CIVIC APPRECIATION AWARD**

The Mayor made reference to those who had lost their lives or were injured in the Brussels attacks.

Council held a Minutes Silence.

A presentation took place for Mrs. Freda Millett in recognition of her outstanding service and dedication to Oldham.

Councillors Stretton and Heffernan gave congratulatory speeches to Mrs. Millett.

Mrs. Millett was then presented with her award and made a short acceptance speech to Council.

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

The Mayor advised the meeting that the next 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 Jiten Patel via email:

“At a very recent council meeting I raised an issue of fly tipping behind the properties on Langham Road Coppice (OL8 1AX) and was assured that the council would help. I have approached my ward Councillor Kaiser Rehman who we only ever see him when he knocks on doors at election time and have been ignored. Before the cabinet member reads out another scripted response I would ask her to view the pictures I have sent her via email and agree with me that this is not acceptable and is unfair to local residents.

To end... The reason I'm sending this email now is because I've seen stories in the Oldham chronicle over the last couple of weeks about other areas being blighted by the same thing and they've been sorted out. So why can't we get ours cleaned up as well together with a long term solution?"

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Cooperatives responded and agreed that this was a disgraceful situation, however this was not entirely the Council's responsibility. Everyone had a role to play and report those who were flytipping so we can prosecute them. Some sites were privately owned. In respect of the incident, officers were in the process of gathering evidence and being investigated. Legal notices had been issued and the owner given seven days to clean it up. Residents would also be informed of the responsibilities.

2. Question received from Metrolink Meerkat via Twitter:

"Why are Oldham Councillors allowance + expenses £941k compared to Rochdale £712k (I expect a weak evasive answer as usual).

Councillor Shah, Cabinet Member for Policy and Governance responded that the Council in fact paid less when compared to some other Greater Manchester authorities. Although members voted on the allowances, the allowances were recommended by a panel of independent people who were members of the public. The allowance system gave consideration to out of pocket expenses and time taken to carry out council business. Transparency was important and it was right that residents get to see how much their local councillors were paid in allowances and expenses and allowances were published annually.

3. Question received from Ian Leech via Twitter:

"With the cuts will OMBC look to get rid of the outdated Parish Council's and save over 200k for precept payers?"

Councillor Shah, Cabinet Member for Policy and Governance responded that the work which parish councillors did was valued and they had an important role to play. However, they were to be encouraged to think about what more they can do and take more responsibility such as bidding for services. All areas of council expenditure were constantly reviewed. A review would be welcomed if agreed and that is what the public wanted but that would need be supported across the Chamber by all political parties. Ultimately it would be for local residents. Parish Councils serve residents direct and they know if they remain fit for purpose.

4. Question received from Treguard via Twitter

"Do we know what's happening with the land opposite the Millgate pub Failsworth and when construction will start/finish?"

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport responded that the site in question was privately owned and an outline planning consent for residential development of the cleared site was approved by the Council in January 2016. A further detailed application for the construction of 32 houses had been submitted and was due for consideration over the coming weeks. In the event that the last application be approved, it was anticipated that the owner would be keen to see development commence at the earliest opportunity.

5. Question received from Dave@mercurycz via Twitter

“Can we have traffic measures on Sholver Lane to reduce excessive speed and can we have enforced 3 ton weight limit please?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport responded that the issue of speeding on the highway was primarily a police matter and they managed and operated a system of enforcement on the roads as part of their role in the Greater Manchester Casualty Reduction Partnership. Where funding permitted it might be possible for the Council to consider physical highway measures in the form of traffic calming for the reduction of speed of traffic. In this scenario, sites with the worst injury accident records would be given highest priority in any future programme. The traffic speed data that the Council had suggested that Sholver Lane would not qualify as a Greater Manchester Casualty Reduction Partnership Community Concern site. Community concern sites were location which were of a concern to the local community. These sites might not have an accident history, but have a significant speeding problem to warrant enforcement before accidents happen. The ‘3T lorry’ signs at the top of Sholver Lane indicated the boundary of a parking ban that applies to goods vehicles over 3 tons in weight which covered the whole Sholver area. It was not a weight limit preventing vehicles weighing more than 3 tonnes travelling along Sholver Lane because all properties in the area need services provided by goods vehicles, not least of which is the refuse service.

6. Question received from Woody@steven0270979 via Twitter

“In the light of the ONS stating Oldham is at the bottom of the table, what is the council going to do about it?”

Councillor Stretton, Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise responded that the ONS Survey had caused a huge amount of public debate. A Leader’s Blog had been published and the response and support for it had been overwhelming. People felt angry about that story. It was vital to get the facts straight. There was deprivation in the borough and the Council was working to address that. The ONS only focussed on the centrally-located wards near Oldham Town Centre. Districts to the North, South, East and West such as Royton, Shaw, Failsworth, Hollinwood, Chadderton and Saddleworth had not

been included. The parts of Oldham surveyed were those who are known to have socio-economic problems. Like many conurbations, these areas were suffering from the decline in manufacturing. The survey was based on data from 2011 and had failed to take into account the regeneration work and the metrolink extension. Programmes such as Get Oldham Working and Warm Homes were in place. A range of partners had committed to working together for the improvement of school results through the Oldham and Education Skills Commission. This was lazy journalism from researchers interrogating spreadsheets. The report did not recognise any of the work done since 2011. Since 2009 £192 million of funding had been cut, £90m out from welfare reform as well as other cuts to funding. Mr. Osborne had said that Oldham was part of the 'Northern Powerhouse' but the necessary funding was yet to be realised. The message to Government was to help us and to stop knocking Oldham and help us turn it around.

7. Question received from Barry Locke via email

"Does the council support Oldham East & Saddleworth MP Debbie Abraham's campaign to amend the 2011 Localism Act preventing convicted Sex Offenders, including Saddleworth Councillor Mike Buckley, from serving on a Parish Council?"

Councillor Shah, Cabinet Member for Policy and Governance responded that this particular case had received media coverage and public interest. As it stood under the Localism Act 2011 the Parish Council hands were tied, there was limited legal recourse to remove him at present and he could continue to hold office. Greg Clark, Secretary of State, was backing a change in the rules. On the exact question on whether the Council supported the campaign, she was not able to answer as the Council had not considered the issue and come to a vote. She shared her own view, which was shared by others, in that the law should be changed and she did not believe anyone convicted of a child sex offence should be allowed to hold office.

8. Question received from Syed Maruf Ali via email

"Education and skills levels in Werneth are low. At Foundation Stage, 45.2% of children reach a good level of development (compared to 51.3% in Oldham). For GCSEs, results are broadly in line with the Oldham average. Despite this, NEET rates are the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in Oldham (6.1%). Can we please discuss about the NEET figure in Werneth Ward and what intervention and strategies are in place to reduce the NEET figure?"

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills responded that improving educational attainment and progression from education into employment were fundamentally important features of the Council's policy. The Council had supported improvement in primary schools in the ward as follows.

The Council had supported St. Patricks through coaching for teachers brokered by the council from SS Aidan & Oswald, leading to increased progress in all subjects and a 15% increase in the proportion of children reaching the government expected standard. As an OFSTED Good, St. Thomas had required just quality assurance of the school's own improvement plan through a council funded School Improvement Partner and there had been an increase here as well. Werneth and Freehold were academies whose sponsors were responsible for managing standards, both have had recent small declines in attainment. The Council had reviewed its contract with Positive Steps to ensure NEETs were more targeted, and the latest NEET rate for Werneth is 4.1% not 6.1%. This was now below average (4.1% compared to 4.5% borough average). In the latest comparative data for statistical neighbours (4.5%) and the England average (4.2%). Positive Steps state the rate within Werneth was very positive considering the levels of deprivation within the area, and therefore there were no additional specific interventions planned, other than what was already happening across the NEET agenda overall, which obviously included activity within the Werneth area.

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 Jabbar:

“Tandle View Court is an excellent home in Royton North for older people and those needing extra care – can the relevant Cabinet Member comment on the potential implications for residents of the Government’s proposals (now under review) to restrict Housing Benefit? A survey by Inside Housing found that 95% of supported housing providers thought that they would be forced to close supported housing schemes for vulnerable and older people if a Housing Benefit cap announced in the chancellor’s spending review is implemented. This is because the extra care people need is funded by charging higher rents. Can the relevant Cabinet Member also assure me that the Council will be making the strongest possible case for continued Housing Benefit payments during the current review of this proposed change?”

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance and Human Resources responded that the Council’s extra care housing schemes were all managed within the Council’s Housing Revenue Account. There were a number of potential issues regarding how Council housing was funded based on the Government’s radical proposals. These issues had been reported previously to the Council and officers continued to keep a close eye on the Government’s welfare reform and housing bill



proposals both to highlight any key risks and identify how they might be managed. Concern was expressed that this Government seemed focussed on dismantling the ability of the Council and its social housing partners to deliver much needed affordable and specialist supported housing in the borough. Councillor Jabbar was proud of the Extra Care Housing service at Tandle View Court in Royton and agreed with Councillor Roberts that this provided excellent and much-needed supported accommodation. He offered assurances that Councillor Hibbert and the Chief Executive had written to the Government expressing concerns in the strongest possible terms to these potential changes as early as November 2015. He was pleased to inform members that intensive lobbying with partners had made the Government reconsider implementation of their proposals until at least April 2017. The impact of the effects on the introduction of any changes to how specialist supported accommodation like Extra Care was funding would be looked into.

2. Councillor Chadderton to Councillor Akhtar:

“Following the announcement in February 2015 that Royton and Crompton School would be a beneficiary of funding for a new build, through the Priority School Building Programme, can the cabinet member provide us with an update as to the current position surrounding this.”

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, responded that in July 2014 an application was made for funding to rebuild Royton and Crompton School under central governments Priority Schools Building Programme Phase 2. Since the initial application the Council had been made aware of our ‘partial success’ but had yet to be informed of the actual content by the Education Funding Agency. A further meeting had been proposed by the EFA for April 2016 to commence the project scoping. Whilst Oldham Council and the school had aspirations for a total new build, it was noted that the EFA had only specifically referred to addressing condition issues in two of the school blocks neither a partial or total rebuild. The Capital and Works Manager was keeping in regular verbal contact with his opposite number at the EFA and had received verbal reassurances that the feasibility and design activity would commence in April 2016. Whilst the Council would like to see this project happen immediately, the Council would need to acknowledge and work within the boundaries of the centrally funded programme of works and do all that could be done to work with the EFA to get the maximum benefit for the current and future students at Royton and Crompton.

3. Councillor McLaren to Councillor Hibbert / Councillor Brownridge:

“The Rochdale Canal runs through Chadderton Central Ward, in the 1980’s a regeneration scheme replaced the former Drummer Hill swing bridge with a fixed wooden bridge. This bridge forms part of a thoroughfare between the Firwood Park estate and

Joshua Lane, and it allows residents to access vital transport links. The bridge is now in a poor state of repair and several temporary repairs have been carried out, could the relevant Cabinet Member please advise us what steps are being taken to ensure that this important community asset is maintained to a level that will allow continued use?"



Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Cooperatives, responded that the footbridge had been built as part of the canal regeneration project. British Waterways and the Council worked together to undertake the works but no agreement had been made as to the responsibility for future maintenance. Whilst this was not a Council asset, emergency repairs had been undertaken on safety grounds and quotations for long term repairs were being obtained. Discussions were ongoing with the Canal and River Trust for an agreement to be reached on bridge ownership and future maintenance.

4. Councillor Williamson to Councillor Hibbert:

"Like every Councillor, I often report issues relating to Highways, such as potholes, when these are brought to my attention by constituents or when I spot them in the course of my ward work. As a Councillor I provide a professional and prompt service to my constituents, including regular updates on progress with an issue. So why is it that I cannot receive a prompt service from this department to help me carry out my duties?"

Over the last six months, a number of incidents where I have reported issues, asked for site visits, chased up early contact, and got nowhere. These issues appear to have 'fallen on deaf ears' or 'been forgotten'. Not just for a day or two, but for a number of weeks. This should not be a standard of service that any Councillor should be required to accept.

At present when I report an issue I receive an automated email to acknowledge receipt, and then another 'personally addressed' to say that it has been passed to 'our Highways Section'. Then nothing!

I have to keep chasing officers for an answer and it doesn't help that the email have no reference number on them. This is slapdash. As there is no feedback, I've often had to go round to the areas several times to check for myself if a repair has been done.

I know that I am not the only one that has been experiencing problems with current practice. Can I therefore ask the Cabinet Member responsible to investigate the way members enquiries are dealt with through the [highways@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:highways@oldham.gov.uk) and to make the necessary changes so members enquiries are in future dealt with professionally and promptly, that they get regular progress reports?

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport rejected the negative remarks. The Highways Department received around 8,000 requests for service each year and it had been recognised that there was a clear need to automate the allocation and investigation process with an investment in a new highways asset management system. The

project to deliver a new system was underway and this would improve the responsiveness of the service with a clear risk based approach to delivering an efficient service. It was understood that officers had apologised and met with Councillor Williamson on site to respond to the issues raised and going forward improvements would be key in the improving clear and appropriate communications with all Council stakeholders. Councillor Hibbert stated that he received far more compliments than complaints regarding staff.

#### 5. Councillor Fielding to Councillor Hibbert

“The frequency of trams from Failsworth has increased to every 6 minutes in both directions at most times of the day. Manchester bound, alternate trams currently terminate at Exchange Square in the city centre. Can the cabinet member responsible please update on how soon these trams will be able to continue across the city so that Failsworth residents can access South Manchester destinations directly?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport, responded that from September this year when the St. Peter’s stop fully reopens, a 12 minute service will resume to South Manchester (Rochdale to East Didsbury). The additional service from Shaw and Crompton to Exchange Square would remain as it is until the opening of Second City Crossing, which was forecast for completion in Summer 2017. The routing of Oldham trams following completion of Second City Crossing had not yet been confirmed. Councillor Hibbert gave assurances that concerns had been pressed with Transport for Greater Manchester.

#### 6. Councillor Ball to Councillor Harrison

“In St. James’ we have come across many housing associations tenants who are not being allowed the correct bathroom facilities for their needs. Despite it being advised that they need a shower cubicle. This is because shower cubicles are not being put in above the ground floor, because future tenants may wish to turn it back into a bath. Many of these tenants are elderly or disabled, and in order for them to remain in their home, amongst support from family and friends they need a safe way to bathe. It is council policy that people remain in their homes within their communities as long as possible, and our partners have agreed to this. Why is it not happening?”

Councillor Harrison, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Safeguarding responded that the Council worked closely with housing provider partners to make best use of social housing stock and look for the best housing solutions for residents. This may include making adaptations or changes to an existing home or discussing with residents re-housing options which might work better in the long-term.

Housing provider partners in Oldham Housing Investment Partnership had agreed an adaptations policy which covered what adaptations would normally be agreed, including issues



such as shower cubicles and level access showers. This policy had been developed in partnership with the Council, Oldham Care and Support and the Community Occupational Therapy Team. One of the purposes of the policy was to ensure the maximisation of the Disabled Facilities Grant and, as such, all the partners supported an approach to rehousing as an option in the first instance. A housing provider would normally only consider installing a shower cubicle or level access shower in the case where a bathroom is on the ground floor or there is lift access to the upper floor. If a resident requires a shower cubicle or level access shower and they have to walk upstairs, a better longer-term solution was re-housing. This policy also clarified that adaptations would not normally be removed when a tenant left the property. Any properties with major adaptations which became available were offered to people who had a medical need for those adaptations. Councillor Ball was requested to send through details of specific cases so that could be investigated.

7. Councillor Harkness to Councillor Hibbert

“As part of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, a number of green field sites in Dobcross, Delph, Diggle and Denshaw that are within my ward in Saddleworth are up for consideration to build houses and some are inappropriate. Will the Cabinet Member join me in opposing housing development on green field sites and instead work with me in looking first as the suitability of brown field sites, such as Baileys Mill and Birks Quarry?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport responded that Oldham’s Monitoring Report for 2014/15 showed that we had sufficient land to meet current new housing need, with a 7 year supply of deliverable housing land. However, if through the work ongoing the Combined Authority, identified a need to delivery greater housing growth, additional development opportunities would need to be identified. Sites had been put forward by interested parties as part of the work to develop the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and these were now being assessed. At this stage these sites had no status or endorsement as sites for future development by either Greater Manchester or ourselves. Councillor Hibbert reemphasised that these sites were just “twinkles” in developers’ eyes and would go no further. Obviously the suitability of brownfield sites would form part of this work with the next formal consultation being in the Autumn when the draft GMSF would be published for comment.

8. Councillor Marie Bashforth to Councillor Hibbert

“I have noticed what seems to be an increase in the failure of individual street lighting columns in my ward. Can the relevant Cabinet Member provide us with a contact where we can report failures, and be confident that the message will get through and a repair will follow in a reasonable time?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport responded that to report a street lighting outage the number to contact was 03003038881 or alternatively by email to 'O&RPFI@sustainable.eon-uk.com, however, if the fault was an immediate risk to health and safety Eon could be contacted on 0800 015 0452. Councillor Hibbert requested that this contract information be provided to all councillors.

9. Councillor Qumer to Councillor Hibbert

“When is the road surface on Waterloo Street being repaired?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport responded that a recent site inspection by the highways officers had shown a number of defects which required attention. Councillor Hibbert confirmed that the officers were working to ensure the repairs needed were undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

10. Councillor Price to Councillor Brownridge

“A major issue in parts of Waterhead is litter and fly tipping. A very successful initiative was a neighbourhood caretaker that myself and ward colleagues funded. Would the cabinet member consider a more localised approach in areas where litter and fly tipping are an issue; such as a neighbourhood caretaker?”

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Cooperatives responded that the Council had a targeted approach and the investment made last year reflected this with the dandy men focused on key routes and a dedicated team working closely with enforcement officers not only to clean the areas but as importantly hold those responsible to account. It was to be stressed that evidence showed that as long as the Council picked it up people would put it back down. Changing behaviours was the way to tackle those who blight an area. There was an opportunity for individual wards to take up a targeted programme and employment of a caretaker was one way to get actively involved.

11. Councillor Sheldon to Councillor Hibbert

“Please can I ask a question to Councillor Dave Hibbert re highways. I have noticed over the past weeks several footpaths being resurfaced, this includes Chew Valley Road Greenfield, Oldham Road Grasscroft and Huddersfield Road from the former Star Inn at Scouthead all the way to Lees. I have been disappointed that these footpaths have been given a higher priority for repair to the footpath on High Street Uppermill. I requested the resurfacing before the carriageway was resurfaced in September 2015. High Street Uppermill is a very popular tourist destination by day and has a very lively night scene, without exaggeration there are thousands of footsteps through Uppermill each week. The state of the footpaths are a disgrace and with the slightest amount of rainfall the footpath turns into a series of large puddles. Please can I have an

assurance from Councillor Hibbert that the footpaths on High Street Uppermill will be repaired/resurfaced as a matter of urgency?”

“Please can I also ask Councillor Hibbert for an update on the progress of work to reopen the Riverside path from Spring Street to Bridge Street, Uppermill?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport responded that the remainder of the High Street, Uppermill footways would continue to be inspected and monitored on a monthly basis for deterioration and drainage.

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport also responded that the footpath had been closed for safety reasons as the whole of the embankment in this location was eroding and moving towards the river. Unfortunately, the land had not registered owner to carry out works to stabilise the embankment. Currently, any money spent on clearing the footpath could cause the embankment to collapse further. The footpath closure was extended until December this year and between now and then officers would be working to bring the current situation to a conclusion.

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

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

3 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Ames, Briggs, Dawson and Larkin.

4 **TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 16TH DECEMBER 2015, 27TH JANUARY 2016 AND 24TH FEBRUARY 2016 BE SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016 be approved as a correct record.

5 **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:

Councillor McCann declared a personal interest at Item 15 by virtue of his appointment to the Unity Partnership Board, Unity Joint Venture Board and the MioCare Board.

Councillor Jabbar declared a personal interest at Item 15 by virtue of his appointment to the Unity Partnership Board and at Item 13 by virtue of his appointment as a Governor at Oldham College.

Councillor Stretton declared a personal interest at Item 13 by virtue of her appointment to Oasis Academy and Item 15 by virtue of her appointment to the Unity Partnership Board.

Councillor Harrison declared a personal interest at Item 15 by virtue of her appointment to the MioCare Board.

Councillor Ginny Alexander declared a personal interest at Item 15 by virtue of her appointment to the MioCare Board.

Councillor Dean declared a personal interest at Item 15 by virtue of his appointment to the Unity Partnership Board and the Unity Joint Venture Board.

Councillor Steven Bashforth declared a pecuniary interest at Item 13 by virtue of his employment by the Governors at Radclyffe School.

Councillor Chauhan declared a personal interest at Item 14 by virtue of his appointment to the MioCare Board.

Councillor Judge declared a personal interest at Item 13 by virtue of his appointment as a school governor at Royton and Crompton School.

Councillor Gloster declared a personal interest at Item 13 by virtue of his appointment as a Governor at Crompton House and a pecuniary interest in Item 15 by virtue of his employment with Greater Manchester Police.

Councillor Sheldon declared a pecuniary interest at Item 13 by virtue of any business with Saddleworth School.

Councillor McMahon declared a personal interest at Item 13 by virtue of his being elected as a Member of Parliament.

Councillor Marie Bashforth declared a pecuniary interest at Item 13 by virtue of her employment by a Foundation School and School Governors.

Councillor Shuttleworth declared a personal interest at Item 13 by virtue of his appointment as a Governor at Limehurst Primary School.

Councillor Garry declared a pecuniary interest at Item 15 by virtue of her husband's employment with Greater Manchester Police.

Councillor Ahmad declared a personal interest at Item 13 by virtue of his appointment as a Governor at Waterhead Academy, Harmony Trust, Greenhill Primary School and Oldham College.

Councillor Hussain declared a personal interest at Item 13 by virtue of his appointment as a Governor at Kingfisher School.

Councillor Mushtaq declared a personal interest at Item 13 by virtue of his appointment as a Governor at Oldham Academy.

Councillor Akhtar declared a personal interest at Item 13 by virtue of his appointment as a Governor at Werneth Primary School.

Councillor Williams declared a personal interest at Item 13 by virtue of his appointment as a Governor at New Bridge School and Oasis Academy.

Councillor Moores declared a personal interest at Item 13 by virtue of his appointment as Chair of Governors at Blue Coat School and his appointment as Director, Cranmer Educational Trust.

Councillor Ur-Rehman declared a personal interest at Item 13 by virtue of his appointment as Chair of Governors, Hathershaw School.

**NOTE:** Councillor Williams entered the meeting during this item.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

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

The Mayor advised that three Councillors would be retiring at the end of the current Municipal Year, namely Councillors David Hibbert, David Dawson, and Valerie Sedgwick.

Councillors Stretton, McCann and Hudson paid tribute to the work of Councillor Hibbert.

Councillor McMahon paid tribute to the work of Councillor David Dawson.

Councillors Sykes, Stretton, Blyth and Hudson paid tribute to the work of Councillor Valerie Sedgwick.

Councillor David Hibbert exercised his right of reply.  
Councillor Valerie Sedgwick exercised her right of reply.

The Mayor advised that this would be the last meeting for Elaine McLean, Executive Director – Economy and Skills, who would be retiring from the authority.

Councillors Stretton and Sykes paid tribute to the work of Elaine McLean.

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

The Mayor advised that four petitions had been received for noting by Council:

Neighbourhoods and Cooperatives

Petition to Save the Front of the Old Royton Swimming Baths (received 10 December 2015) (357 signatures) (Ref 2015-24)

Petition Against an Alcohol License (received 21 December 2015) (192 signatures) (Ref 2015-26)

Economy and Skills

Petition to Rebuild Clarksfield School (received 4 January 2016) (340 signatures) (Ref 2016-01)

Petition for Road Improvements at Greenfield Primary School (received 28 January 2015) (365 signatures) (Ref 2016-02)

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



## OUTSTANDING BUSINESS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Mayor informed the meeting that there was one item of outstanding business from the previous meeting.



### Motion 1

Councillor Hibbert MOVED and Councillor Fielding SECONDED the following motion:

“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.

AMENDMENT

Councillor McCann MOVED and Councillor Murphy  
SECONDED the following amendment:



“Remove the word ‘that’ in line one.  
Insert the word ‘tenants’ in line six, three additional lines as follows:

‘Reducing social rents by 1 percent per annum;  
Imposing market rents on households earning £30,000 a year or more making it less likely than such households will be able to afford to sustain a successful tenancy’

Bullet point lines five to (now) ten as follows:

- Forcing ‘high-value’ council homes to be sold on the open market;
- Extending the right-to-buy to housing association tenants;
- Reducing social rents by 1 percent per annum;
- Imposing market rents on households earning £30,000 a year or more making it less likely than such households will be able to afford to sustain a successful tenancy;
- Undermining section 106 requirements on private developers to provide affordable homes.

Replace the word ‘taking’ with ‘transferring’ in (now) line 17

Replace the word ‘for’ with ‘to’ in (now) line 18

Insert the word ‘Secretary’ in (now) line 18 of “State”

Insert after ‘Oldham and Greater Manchester’ the following new paragraph:

‘Council further notes with grave concern the recent announcement by Chancellor George Osborne that he plans to cap housing benefit for specialist social rented properties at the same rate as private rented accommodation from April. This will put the provision of specialist housing for around 50,000 vulnerable adults, such as dementia patients, disabled people and women fleeing domestic violence under threat of closure.’

Insert as a final bullet point at the end of the original motion the following wording:

‘Ask the Council’s Housing Strategy team to carry out, in conjunction with the Oldham Investment Housing Partnership, an analysis of the likely impact within the borough of Oldham of the forced sale of council homes, the extension of right-to-buy, the diminution of the ‘starter homes’ requirement on developers, the imposition of market rents on households with a £30,000 income occupying social housing, and the imposition of a cap on housing benefit payments made to vulnerable tenants occupying social-rented accommodation, and to identify any measures that may mitigate this impact, for circulation to elected members.’



Amended motion to read:

“This council notes:

- 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;
  - Reducing social rents by 1 percent per annum;
  - Imposing market rents on households earning £30,000 a year or more making it less likely than such households will be able to afford to sustain a successful tenancy;
  - 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 transferring 32 new wide and open-ended powers to the Secretary of State from councils and local communities, including the ability to override 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 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.

Council further notes with grave concern the recent announcement by Chancellor George Osborne that he plans to cap housing benefit for specialist social rented properties at the same rate as private rented accommodation from April. This will put the provision of specialist housing for around 50,000 vulnerable tenants, such as dementia patients, disabled people and women fleeing domestic violence, under threat of closure.

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.

- Ask the Council's Housing Strategy team to carry out, in conjunction with the Oldham Investment Housing Partnership, an analysis of the likely impact within the borough of Oldham of the forced sale of council homes, the extension of right-to-buy, the diminution of the 'starter homes' requirement on developers, the imposition of market rents on households with a £30,000 income occupying social housing, and the imposition of a cap on housing benefit payments made to vulnerable tenants occupying specialist social-rented accommodation, and to identify any measures that may mitigate this impact, for circulation to elected members."

Without debate the Council moved to the vote on the AMENDMENT.

On being put to the vote FIFTY FIVE VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with ONE ABSTENTION. The AMENDMENT was therefore CARRIED.

A vote was then taken on the SUBSTANTIVE MOTION.

On being put to the vote FIFTY FIVE VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the SUBSTANTIVE MOTION with ONE ABSTENTION. The Motion was therefore CARRIED.

**RESOLVED that:**

- Councillor Sue Derbyshire, Chair of Greater Manchester Planning and Housing Commission, be contacted 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.
- the Council's Housing Strategy team be asked to carry out, in conjunction with the Oldham Investment Housing Partnership, an analysis of the likely impact within the borough of Oldham of the forced sale of council homes, the extension of right-to-buy, the diminution of the 'starter homes' requirement on developers, the imposition of market rents on households with a £30,000 income occupying social housing, and the imposition of a cap on housing benefit payments made to vulnerable tenants occupying specialist social-rented accommodation, and to identify any measures that may mitigate this impact, for circulation to elected members.

10

**YOUTH COUNCIL**

There were no items submitted by the Youth Council.

11

**LEADER AND CABINET QUESTION TIME**

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



**Oldham**  
Council

Question 1: Oldham Deprived and Unhappy

“My first question tonight concerns a disturbing recent report published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) which has identified Oldham as the most deprived town in England. In the study conducted by the ONS factors such as income, employment, health, education, skills and training, and crime were considered.

The study found that Oldham was the most deprived overall, with over 60% of our areas ranked in the most deprived 20% of all the areas of England.

This is an astonishing fact when you think it includes areas in the North East, Midlands, Yorkshire and elsewhere in the North West all of which are better than us!

I and my colleagues take no pride in topping this league table!

This time last year there was another survey published by the Rightmove estate agency chain; the Happy at Home survey asked UK homeowners questions about twelve factors relating to their experiences living in their area.

Oldham was placed 106<sup>th</sup> of 130 local authorities. And this was the aggregate score – we scored even worse on contentment and community safety at 123<sup>rd</sup> out of 130.

So, Oldham has once again been identified as both the most deprived Borough in England, and one of the least happy towns to live in the UK.

These are hardly accolades that we as elected local leaders aspire to; and they are hardly a great advertisement that will attract new business and new residents to our Borough as their location of choice.

No we all know – because we live here – that all is not doom and gloom in our Borough. We have great people, with our famed Northern humour, a ‘can do’ attitude and a proud history of industry and diversity. We have great countryside and culture, but these national headlines do us no favour.

There has been much talk in this chamber of the significant physical regeneration that is being undertaken in the Borough, regeneration paid for ultimately by our hard-pressed Council Tax payers. But if this physical regeneration does not lead to a real improvement in the economic fortunes and the physical and mental well-being of our most deprived and unhappy citizens it will have failed in what I see as one of its key objectives.

So my question to the Leader tonight. What are we going to do to get ourselves not only off the top of this league table of most deprived but actually into another league altogether.”

Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council, responded that she was as disappointed as every member was but there had been a massive response of support on social media and email. The study was a bizarre piece of research, picked up by a lazy journalist and having read the whole report was even more appalled. The report did not talk about the Borough of Oldham, only built up urban areas. Oldham had gotten into the list of 200 towns but Tameside didn’t and there was not a lot of difference.



Tameside had not qualified to be looked at in this way. The study identified areas which included St. Mary's, Werneth, Hollinwood and Coldhurst which have indices of deprivation, the study did not include areas such as Shaw, Royton, Chadderton and Saddleworth. It was interesting that in the Sunday Times Saddleworth was named as one of the top ten places to live. The study had been based on the 2011 census when we did not have the Metrolink or started the journey of regeneration of the Old Town Hall, Odeon cinema and other businesses. Councillor Stretton accepted that there was still more to do. It was still true that there was deprivation in those wards. Councillor Stretton accepted Councillor Sykes' offer. The Council needed to challenge at Greater Manchester and national level that if there was a problem here, they should not be knocking us but giving us the money to invest in those places and in the recommendations of the Oldham Education and Skills Commission. She said the MP's would assist. It needed to be a collective response on the attack made on the Borough which was grossly unfair.

#### Question 2: Teenage Pregnancy

"My second question to the Leader tonight also references a recent publication by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) that equally makes disturbing news.

According to the ONS, Oldham's teenage pregnancy rate is now the highest in Greater Manchester. In 2014, 156 girls aged fifteen to seventeen became pregnant – this is a rate of 34.7 per 1,000 girls in this age bracket.

This is clearly concerning.

In October 2014, I rose to ask the then Leader a question about our Borough's appalling record of tooth decay amongst children, but at that time I was also pleased to congratulate the Oldham Teenage Pregnancy Partnership on their work in reducing the teenage pregnancy rate by almost two thirds since 1998.

These latest figures demonstrate that there is still a lot of work to be done.

I am sure that in some instances the pregnancy is planned and the news is received with great joy, but in others this can be a very troubling occasion.

Frequently these teenagers begin motherhood at a great disadvantage, without the maturity, skills, financial and emotional support necessary to be most successful in that role. Dependent often upon welfare benefits and socially isolated, they can begin their parenting role on the back-foot. And despite their best efforts, they can also be subjected to disapproval and vilification by family members, by their peers and by the press, being dubbed 'gym slip mothers'. Sadly there have also been documented instances where medical professionals also share this prejudice.

So for my second question tonight, I would like to ask the Leader what is being done to ensure that the rates of unwanted teenage pregnancy in this Borough continue to decline and also to ensure that teenage mothers receive the support that they deserve in taking on the challenging responsibilities of parenthood at such a young age."

Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council, responded that this was a worrying statistic. Some will have made a conscious choice, but for many it was not and it was the most vulnerable who found themselves in the position, and who would have least support from family to help them navigate that time in their life. It was true to say that teenage pregnancy occurs in relatively small numbers but a few pregnancies can skew statistics but this was still not acceptable. The Leader agreed to task officers to find out why the increase as this should be the first step, and look to address all of the factors that were discovered during the investigation. Councillor Stretton assured members that the Council would pull together whatever resources were needed to prevent this happening in the numbers at present.

The Leader of the UKIP Group, Councillor Peter Klonowski, asked the following question to the Leader of the Council:

With the changes to legislation on ethical approach to businesses and the proposed changes to procurement, does the Council consider it appropriate to have representation on the board and dealing with Oldham Property Partnership, the company was owned by Brookhouse Group, part of an aggregate group with a tax haven in Luxembourg. Also, would the Council consider setting up a scrutiny procedure about future Council developments so they do not involve companies based in tax havens?

Councillor McMahon raised a point of order as this claim had arisen during the Parliamentary by-election and UKIP through their solicitors had withdrawn their complaint and said it would not be repeated again.

Councillor Stretton did not respond to the question.

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 Roberts to Councillor Akhtar

“Can the relevant Cabinet Member comment on the potential effect on Oldham Schools' budgets of the new Government consultation on a new national school funding formula which has recently been announced. Reports suggest that inner city schools will be adversely affected with money being redistributed to shire counties. There is also the implication that local authorities will receive less money to help, for example, with raising school standards and carrying out statutory duties as more money may go directly to schools.”

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, responded that the consultation on school funding was published on 7<sup>th</sup> March and runs until 17<sup>th</sup> April 2016. As the first of two planned consultations, this consultation focused on

the proposed principles of a new national funding formula and the factors that should be included in it.

It was proposed that the national funding formula be based on four factors: an age-weighted per-pupil sum, an amount based on additional pupil need such as low prior attainment, deprivation, English being an additional language, a lump sum for each school (greater for small schools in more sparsely populated areas) and a geographical factor. This consultation covered whether or not these were the right factors to be included, but did not suggest any weightings that might be given to them. Until suggested weightings were known it was not possible to model what the impact of the formula might be on any particular school or local authority area. The council was well aware, however, of the significant pressures on school budgets that already existed and were likely to remain once a national formula was in place.

It was noted that local authorities would receive less funding for their work with schools but it was not possible to accurately forecast the decrease until the second phase of the government consultation.

## 2. Councillor Fielding to Councillor Jabbar

“Tesco Failsworth Store along with other Tesco Branches had recently reduced it’s Monday – Saturday opening hours from 24 hours to 6am – 11pm. Can I ask the relevant Cabinet Member does this affect the rateable value of the store and the amount that we collect from this and other branches of Tesco in business rates?”

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance and Human Resources, responded that a change in business’s opening hours did not affect the Rateable Value of a property for the purposes of business rates and as such this would not impact the Council’s collection of business rates from Tesco. The rateable value of a property was determined by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) and was based on property rental values at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008. It was possible that a material change to a property, the environment or a change in use could affect the rateable value. However, a change in opening hours was not a consideration for the VOA in determining the Rateable Value.

## 3. Councillor Haque to Councillor Jabbar

“What has the Council done or achieved in reducing sickness absence and associated costs since Labour took control in 2011 and do we have any information how well or otherwise our managers comply with the Council’s policy?”

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance and Human Resources, responded that at the last Council meeting Councillor Blyth had attacked the Administration on this issue and criticised managers for not enforcing policy. This provided an opportunity to set the record straight. The outgoing Liberal Democrats had left the Council with a year-end absence figure of almost 11½ days per employee on average. The

administration reduced this year on year to 8 days in March 2014. In 2010/11 only 35% had nil absence in the year. Under Labour control this had almost doubled to more than 60%. Over 60% did not take a single day of sick leave. The costs of staff sickness absence in 2010/11 to the present time had almost halved and agency engagement because of sickness had reduced by 13% in the 2 years 2013 - 15. Sickness absence was being scrutinised by the Performance and Value for Money Select Committee on a regular basis where the Deputy Cabinet Member had given an update to a recent meeting of the Committee. At a time when staff were managing the organisation through a difficult situation, staff were doing a fantastic job. There were no attendance targets under the Liberal Democrats, the Labour Administration introduced targets four years ago which were first set at 10 days, then 8 and not 6 as performance had improved over time.

#### 4. Councillor Williamson to Councillor Brownridge

“Yesterday was UN World Water Day (Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March). In July last year a motion I was proud to co-sponsor was passed in this Chamber regarding water poverty. This called on the Government to end ‘water poverty’ within the lifetime of this Parliament and committed this Council to carry out some specific actions to “promote (the) awareness of, and access to, the support schemes available to customers facing ‘water poverty’.”

I think the likelihood of this Government ending ‘water poverty’ anytime soon is nil, but I would like to ask the Cabinet member for an update on what has been done regarding the actions agreed by this Council?

These were to:

- Promote the availability of these support schemes on-line, in our publications, in our public buildings, and at public events, as part of the ‘Make the Most of Your Money’ and ‘Warm Homes’ campaigns.
- Work with United Utilities and the United Utilities Trust to offer training to elected members and front-line staff so they can actively promote them.
- Offer this training to staff and volunteers from social landlords and other partners.
- Support the research being undertaken by United Utilities to establish greater public acceptance for the social tariff and to identify the most effective ways to engage and support ‘harder-to-reach’ customers.
- Support an application to the United Utilities Trust for funding to deliver, through partner agencies, money advice and financial literacy services targeted at ‘water poor’ customers.

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Cooperatives, summarised activity that was ongoing which

included initiatives under the warm homes scheme, poverty pledges and the partnership approach taken across all sectors. The complete response would be circulated to all elected members.

5. Councillor Malik to Councillor Jabbar

“Is the relevant Cabinet member able to explain the implications of the recent announcement of changes to Business Rates for the future finances of Oldham Council and our ability to pay for essential council services for our local community?”

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance and Human Resources responded that the Council, along with other Councils in Greater Manchester, would be piloting the introduction of 100% Business Rates Retention from April 2017, which was three years ahead of schedule. The Council welcomed the opportunity to be able to shape the new system and make a positive contribution to the new Local Government Finance regime. As with all new initiatives, the devil would be in the detail and the Council would work to safeguard the position for Oldham as far as possible. However, it would be important to continue to maximise Council income from business rates and council tax to enable the funding of essential services in Oldham. The Chancellor had also announced other changes which included permanently doubling Small Business Rates Relief and increasing the threshold for this relief from April 2017. Changes to Small Business Rate Relief were obviously going to be welcomed by the businesses that would benefit from this and the Government had promised to compensate Council from the loss of rating income in the form of a grant. This would extend the grant funding that was currently received from the current rating relief scheme. It was hoped that this would encourage small business set up and support our local economy. It was too early for detailed figures but this would be reported to Council as soon as possible. The Council was investing in the regeneration of the borough. This would boost business rate income and the Council would also actively support business initiatives and invest in the borough with the aim of boosting business rate income.

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

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



## RESPONSES FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016 were submitted.



Members raised the following questions:

1. Councillor McMahon – Cabinet Meeting – 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016, pages 69 and 70, Agenda Item 8 – Oldham Education and Skills Commission Final Report and Future Implementation – He has asked for a copy of the implementation plan but to date he had not received a copy. He noted that the implementation was not in place and concerned if this went one another year would be missed and children were being let down. He asked if the implementation plan could be brought forward and be adopted as soon as possible?

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, responded that the Commission was launched on 15 January. The Commissioners had met regularly and progress had been made on several recommendations. Proposals in the report aimed to raise standards across the spectrum by strengthening strategic leadership. Key partners were being brought together in an Educational Partnership. Key recommendations were led by the education sector and the Council had been supporting commissioners. There was a new board, to save time and money existing members had resigned and new members recruited. The operational practitioner group sat beneath the group for implementation of the 19 recommendations which was being led by a new post which was in the process of being recruited. The Board would get on with the implementation plan prior to the recruitment of the post and this would be shared with all members.

2. Councillor McCann, Cabinet Meeting – 14 December 2015, pages 63 and 64, Item 10 – Project Delivery for Greenfield Primary School Expansion – he was delighted that the Administration had seen fit to fund building a two-form entry school on Shaw Street, Greenfield. Could the Cabinet Member confirm that the project was still on track for opening in September 2017 followed by demolition of the old school and creation of sports facilities?

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, responded that he had met with residents at Greenfield School a couple of weeks ago and the issue of draft design was raised. In the next 4 – 6 weeks a planning application would be submitted and local members and residents had seen the draft plans. The plans would be made public and residents given the opportunity to raise views on those plans.

3. Councillor Murphy, Cabinet Meeting – 14 December 2015, pages 60 and 61, Item 7 – Treasury Management Half Year Review 2015/16 – as the Council was watching every penny he asked about street lighting columns which were on during the daylight hours had an impact on expenditure?

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance and Human Resources, responded that energy used was part of revenue expenditure but this did not mean allowing street lights on during daylight hours and this was against good management of assets or energy. There was a new IT system in place which would address the issue.

4. Councillor Harkness, Cabinet meeting, 25 January 2016, pages 69 and 70, Item 8 – Oldham Education and Skills Commission Final Report and Future Implementation – The Mobility Commission which looked at families and individuals ability to move from one social group to another had been rated poor. Ofsted ratings had declined in the Borough with a trend downward. A large investment had been made in education. He asked what safeguards were in place to ensure that there was genuine collaboration for best value for money and better social mobility?

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, responded that in terms of measures in place, the Commission was asked to set up new partnerships with school led partners and the Council and in coming together saying education was everyone's business. An allocation of £1m over four years had been made available for the improvement of the quality of education across the borough. Since the launch a number of schools had seen improved Ofsted ratings and hoped the journey would continue. The local authority and relevant parties were looking at performance and needed to address the 19 recommendations. The Council wanted leaders were in place to lead on education and curriculum offer – markers were in place which ensured improvement took place.

There were no observations made on the minutes.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016 be noted.
2. The questions and responses on the Cabinet minutes be noted.

13

**NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS**

Motion 1

Councillor Garry MOVED and Councillor McMahon SECONDED the following motion:

“That in the month of International Women’s Day this council reflects on the leading role women have played in fighting for equality and fairness for all.

The Council notes the importance of promoting women in public life and celebrates the fact that two of the three borough Members of Parliament are women as are the Leader, Chief

Executive and the Borough Treasurer in addition to the majority of the senior management team.

The Council also reflects on the remarkable life of Annie Kenney, the Springhead born millworker who went on to be a pioneering suffragette. With others she secured the right for women to vote.

This council also looks forward to 2019 when the borough will mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre where four of the fifteen killed were women. The council notes that while progress has been made much more is needed to realise full equality.

This council commits to:

- 1). Supporting the idea of and investigating funding sources for a permanent memorial to Annie Kenney in the town centre.
- 2). Supporting the idea of and investigating funding sources for a permanent memorial to those killed and injured at Peterloo at Cheapside (outside the civic centre tower) near where the Oldham contingent gathered before marching to Manchester, and that the proposed memorial ideally be in place to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre.
- 3). Placing on record its thanks and appreciation to the organisers and events across the Borough which were held to mark International Women's Day."

#### AMENDMENT

Councillor Williamson MOVED and Councillor Sedgwick SECONDED the following amendment:

"Remove the wording in Lines 7 to 9 and replace this with the following wording:

'This Council reflects on the remarkable lives of:

- Lydia Becker, born in Chadderton, who founded the most popular publication relating to women's suffrage in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Britain, the Women's Suffrage Journal, and who fought successfully to secure votes for women in the Isle of Man in March 1881.
- Annie Kenney, the Springhead born millworker, who went on to be a pioneering suffragette and the first female delegated to the Oldham Trades Union Council. With others she secured the right for women to vote in mainland Britain.'

Insert in Line 15 after 'funding sources' the following grammar and words:

',' primarily private donations and / or a public subscription,'

Insert in Line 16 after 'to' the following words 'Lydia Becker and'

Insert in Line 17 after 'funding sources' the following grammar and words:

',' primarily private donations and/or a public subscription,."

Amended motion to read:

"That in the month of International Women's Day this council reflects on the leading role women have played in fighting for equality and fairness for all.

The council notes the importance of promoting women in public life and celebrates the fact that two of the three borough Members of Parliament are women as are the Leader, Chief Executive and the Borough Treasurer of the Council in addition to the majority of the senior management team.

The Council also reflects on the remarkable lives of:

- Lydia Becker, born in Chadderton, who founded the most popular publication relating to women's suffrage in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Britain, the women's Suffrage Journal, and who fought successfully to secure votes for women in the Isle of Man in March 1881
- Annie Kenney, the Springhead born millworker who went on to be a pioneering suffragette and the first female delegate to the Oldham Trades Union Council. With others she secured the right for women to vote in mainland Britain

The council also looks forward to 2019 when the borough will mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre where four of the fifteen killed were women.

The council notes that while progress has been made much more is needed to realise full equality.

This council commits to:

- 1). Supporting the idea of and investigating funding sources, primarily private donations and / or a public subscription, for a permanent memorial to Lydia Becker and Annie Kenney in the town centre.
- 2). Supporting the idea of and investigating funding sources, primarily private donations and / or a public subscription, for a permanent memorial to those killed and injured at Peterloo at Cheapside (outside the civic centre tower) near where the Oldham contingent gathered before marching to Manchester, and that the proposed memorial ideally be in place to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre.
- 3.) Placing on record thanks and appreciation to the organisers of events across the Borough which were held to mark International Women's Day.

Councillor McMahon spoke against the amendment.

Councillor Bates spoke in support of the amendment.

Councillor Garry exercised her right of reply.

Councillor Williamson exercised her right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT.

On being put to the vote FIFTEEN VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with FORTY-ONE VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

Councillor Mushtaq spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Dearden spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Stretton spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Roberts spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Garry exercised her right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the MOTION. On being put to the vote FIFTY-FIVE VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION with NO VOTES AGAINST and ONE ABSTENTION. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.



**RESOLVED that:**

This council committed to:

- 1). the idea of and investigating funding sources for a permanent memorial to Annie Kenney in the town centre being supported.
- 2). the idea of and investigating funding sources for a permanent memorial to those killed and injured at Peterloo at Cheapside (outside the civic centre tower) near where the Oldham contingent gathered before marching to Manchester, and that the proposed memorial ideally be in place to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre being supported.
- 3). its thanks and appreciation to the organisers and events across the Borough which were held to mark International Women's Day being placed on record.

Motion 2

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

“This Council notes with alarm, the recent statement from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) confirming that new guidelines are to be introduced which will curb councils’ powers to divest from or stop trading with organisations or countries they regard as unethical. Council further notes that the new guidelines, which will amend Pensions and Procurement, follow on from the government’s announcement made at the beginning of October 2015 that it was planning to introduce new rules to stop “politically motivated boycott and divestment campaigns” (Greg Clarke, Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government).

Oldham Council is proud of its commitment to human rights and to putting this into practice through such measures as an ethical approach to its relationship with business. Council believes that the proposed measures now being outlined by the DCLG will seriously undermine the Council’s ability to implement its commitment to ethical procurement and pensions investments. Council also notes that the new guidelines represent a further, serious attack on local democracy and decision-making through a further restriction on councils’ powers. This is directly contrary to the government’s own stated commitment to the principle of localism, given a statutory basis by the Localism Act of 2011, which holds that local authorities are best able to do their job when they have genuine freedom to respond to what local people want, not what they are told to do by government.

This Council resolves to:



- 1). Instruct the Chief Executive to write to Greg Clarke, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to express Council's unequivocal opposition to the proposed changes.
- 2). Write to Debbie Abrahams MP, Angela Rayner MP and Jim McMahon MP to ask them to use any parliamentary means available to oppose these proposals."

**RESOLVED** that the Motion be rolled over to the next Council meeting.

### Motion 3

Councillor Roberts MOVED and Councillor Dearden SECONDED the following motion:

"This Council notes the significant increase in demand for school places in Oldham and welcomes the necessary actions already taken including:

1. Setting up a better forecasting method looking at all available data on births, housing and new arrivals to enable forward planning.
2. Implementing an expansion programme to provide extra capacity. That includes plans to boost primary school places with a new three-form entry school on the former Grange School site, plus the expansion of places in Failsworth, Hollinwood and Lees. A proposed new Saddleworth School will increase pupil numbers from 1,350 to 1,500 – and plans are also about to go out to statutory consultation to double the capacity at Greenfield primary with a new build two-form entry school.

Oldham Council will continue to work with the whole of the school sector including academies and free schools, however the range of providers makes planning school places much more challenging. Under the Government's rules, all new schools to help cope with this demand must be "free schools", created outside of local authority control.

There are now fewer and fewer schools under the direct control of councils. This council believes that local authorities are well placed to act to ensure school places can be created on time – and in the right places.

This Council supports the LGA's call for councils themselves to be able to open new schools, and to require academies to expand to meet local demand, where necessary. Council also resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to:

- 1). Write to the Secretary of State for Education to urge her to change the rules to allow Local Authorities to open new schools and to require academies to expand to meet local demand
- 2). Write to the three 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

Without debate the Council moved to the vote on the MOTION.

On being put to the vote FIFTY ONE VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION with FIVE ABSTENTIONS. The Motion was therefore CARRIED.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The Council support the LGA's call for councils themselves to be able to open new schools, and to require academies to expand to meet local demand, where necessary.
2. The Chief Executive be instructed to write to the Secretary of State for Education to urge her to change the rules to allow Local Authorities to open new schools and to require academies to expand to meet local demand.
3. The Chief Executive be instructed to write to the three 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.

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**NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS**

Motion 1

Councillor Harkness MOVED and Councillor Williamson SECONDED the following motion:

“Council notes that:

- Trees are a natural resource that are greatly treasured by the people of our borough
- Many residents would wish to do what they can to ensure that the trees around them – especially those in our public parks – are properly look after to preserve their beauty and majesty for future generations
- Other local authorities have established tree warden schemes
- In Oldham we already have members of Friends of Parks, Moors and green spaces groups who meet as a network hosted by Voluntary Action Oldham; these dedicated individuals represent a potential source of volunteers.

Council believes that establishing a tree warden scheme would:

- Represent an embodiment of the Co-operative Oldham principal in action;
- Compliment the delivery of the Get Oldham Growing Strategy, particularly in supporting the work of the newly-appointed Tree Planting project officer;
- Provide useful, interesting and accessible voluntary work activity to a wide range of people, including young people and individuals with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health conditions;
- Be an educational resource for our schools when linked to the Forest Schools initiative;
- Supplement the resources of staff at a time of dwindling public finances

Council therefore resolves to ask the relevant Cabinet Member(s) to establish such a scheme for the borough of Oldham.



The Mayor advised the meeting that the time limit for this item had expired and without debate Council MOVED to the VOTE on this MOTION.

Without debate the Council moved to the vote on the MOTION.

On being put to the VOTE, the MOTION was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**RESOLVED that** Council the relevant Cabinet Member be asked to establish a tree warden scheme for the borough of Oldham.

The Mayor advised the meeting that the time limit for this item had expired.

### Motion 2

Councillor Sykes MOVED and Councillor Williamson SECONDED the following motion to the VOTE:

“Council notes that the Living Wage Foundation:

- Exists to recognise and celebrate the leadership shown by living wage employers in raising the living standards of workers.
- Establishes two Living Wage rates every year for employees outside and inside London.
- Has over 1,800 employers accredited with them, with over 1,000 having registered as payers of the National Living Wage in the past year.
- Permits accredited employers to proudly display the Living Wage Employer Mark.

Council further notes that:

- Oldham Council first resolved to become a National Living Wage employer as a result of a Motion brought to full Council in December 2013
- The National Living Wage was introduced as the minimum pay scale for all staff in April 2015.
- As a result five hundred and forty staff had a pay increase.
- In his annual statement to September Council the Leader of the Council rightly highlighted the fact that this was a commendable achievement.

However, despite this achievement, Oldham Council is not currently Living Wage accredited and therefore has not yet received the Living Wage Employer Mark.

Council therefore resolves to ask the Chief Executive to:

- Seek accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation and
- Ensure that the Living Wage Employer Mark is proudly displayed on appropriate pages within the Council’s website and in appropriate printed materials.”

A vote was then taken on the MOTION.

On being put to the VOTE, the MOTION was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.



**RESOLVED** that the Chief Executive:

1. Seek accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation and
2. Ensure that the Living Wage Employer Mark is proudly displayed on appropriate pages within the Council's website and in appropriate printed materials."

### Motion 3

Councillor Heffernan MOVED and Councillor Blyth SECONDED the following motion to the VOTE:

"Oldham Council currently requires companies bidding for council contracts to have ethical and social policies. Council believes that it should also require these bidders to account for their past tax record.

Council notes

- That the UK Government has taken steps to tackle the issue of tax avoidance and evasion by requiring bidders to account for their past tax record in accordance with Procurement Policy Note 03/14 (PPN 03/14). This applies to all central government contracts worth more than £5m.
- In early 2015 new regulations required public bodies, including councils, to ask procurement qualification questions of all companies for tenders over £173,000 for service contracts and £4m for works contracts. However, these questions are not as detailed as the PPN 03/14.

Council believes that it should require bidders for council contracts to account for their past tax record, using the standards in PPN 03/14, rather than the lower standards in the recent regulations.

Council therefore calls upon the relevant Cabinet Member to:

- Instruct officers to revise our procurement procedures to require all companies bidding for council service contracts worth more than £173,000 and works contracts worth more than £4 million to self-certify that they are fully tax-compliant in line with central government practice using the standards in PPN 03/14.
- Ensure that the Council publicises this policy and reports on its implementation on an annual basis.

### AMENDMENT

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Wrigglesworth SECONDED the following amendment to the VOTE:

"Delete:

'rather than the lower standards in the recent regulations.

Council therefore calls upon the relevant Cabinet Member to:

- Instruct officers to revise our procurement procedures to require all companies bidding for council service contracts

worth more than £173,000 and works contracts worth more than £4 million to self-certify that they are fully tax-compliant in line with central government practice using the standards in PPN 03/14.'

Insert:

'Council therefore;

- Commends the action of the relevant Cabinet Member who has already introduced the standards in PPN 03/14 for all council contracts in excess of £5 million, despite this is only being a mandatory requirement for central government contracts and;'

Delete: 'revise'

Insert: 'to assess the implications of revising'

Delete:

- 'Ensure that the Council publicises this policy and reports on its implementation on an annual basis'

Insert:

- 'Requests a report back to council on the findings from the review.'

Motion 3 to then read:

"Oldham Council currently requires companies bidding for council contracts to have ethical and social policies. Council believes that it should also require these bidders to account for their past tax record.

Council notes

- That the UK Government has taken steps to tackle the issue of tax avoidance and evasion by requiring bidders to account for their past tax record in accordance with Procurement Policy Note 03/14 (PPN 03/14). This applies to all central government contracts worth more than £5m.
- In early 2015 new regulations required public bodies, including councils, to ask procurement qualification questions of all companies for tenders over £173,000 for service contracts and £4m for works contracts. However, these questions are not as detailed as the PPN 03/14.

Council believes that it should require bidders for council contracts to account for their past tax record, using the standards in PPN 03/14,

Council therefore;

- Commends the action of the relevant Cabinet Member who has already introduced the standards in PPN 03/14 for all council contracts in excess of £5 million, despite this is only being a mandatory requirement for central government contracts and:
- Instruct officers to assess the implications of revising revise our procurement procedures to require all companies bidding for council service contracts worth more than £173,000 and works contracts worth more than £4 million to self-certify that they are full tax-compliant in line with central government practice using the standards in PPN 03/14.
- Requests a report back to council on the findings from the review.



Councillor Heffernan accepted the AMENDMENT.

A vote was then taken on the SUBSTANTIVE MOTION.

On being put to the VOTE, the SUBSTANTIVE MOTION was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The action of the relevant Cabinet Member who has already introduced the standards in PPN 03/14 for all council contracts in excess of £5 million, despite this is only being a mandatory requirement for central government contracts be commended.
- Officers be instructed to assess the implications of revising revise our procurement procedures to require all companies bidding for council service contracts worth more than £173,000 and works contracts worth more than £4 million to self-certify that they are full tax-compliant in line with central government practice using the standards in PPN 03/14.
- A report be brought back to council on the findings from the review.

15a To note the Minutes of the following Joint Authority meetings and the relevant spokespersons to respond to questions from Members

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:

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority	3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2015
Police and Crime Panel	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
	18 <sup>th</sup> December 2015
	29 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
Joint GMCA / AGMA Executive	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
	18 <sup>th</sup> December 2015
	29 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
National Park Authority	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2015
Transport for Greater Manchester	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2015

A question related to the National Park Authority would be provided to the Council representative for a response.

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

15b To note the Minutes of the following Partnership meetings and the relevant spokespersons to respond to questions from Members

To note the minutes of the following Partnership meetings and the relevant spokespersons to respond to questions from Members.

Minutes of the Partnerships were submitted as follows:

Oldham Leadership Board	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2015
Health and Wellbeing Board	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
Oldham Care and Support	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2015
	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
Unity Partnership Board	5 <sup>th</sup> November 2015

There were no questions or observations.

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

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#### **APPROVAL OF OLDHAM COUNCIL'S PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2016/17**

Consideration was given to a report which presented the Pay Policy Statement for full Council's consideration and approval in line with Chapter 8 of the Localism Act 2011 and the Local Authorities (Data Transparency) Code 2014. There was a requirement for the production of an annual policy statement that covered a number of matters concerning the pay of the Council's employees including Chief Officers. To comply with legislation, the Pay Policy Statement set out the Council's policy related to:

- Chief Officer remuneration (at recruitment, salary, bonus / performance related pay, charges / fees / allowances, benefits in kind and enhancement at pension at termination);
- Remuneration of its lowest paid employees, the definition for this group and the reason for adopting this definition; and
- The relationship between chief officer remuneration and that of other employees – referred to as the 'pay multiple'.

**RESOLVED** that the proposed Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2016/17 be adopted.



17

## **REVISIONS TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES**

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update of the constitutionally agreed Code of Conduct for all non-teaching staff who do not fall within the purview of a governing body.

The revisions to the Code of Conduct for Employees had been made in light of:

- A review of the Council's procedures related to safeguarding to further protect vulnerable groups and included in this the Council's obligations to the Modern Slavery Act.
- A review of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy which had been undertaken to increase policy accessibility and simplify interpretation of the process in accordance with the Council's obligations under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.
- The opportunity to improve the alignment to the corporate values and behaviours of the Council.

**RESOLVED** that the revisions to the Code of Conduct for Employees as outlined in the report be endorsed.

18

## **AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION - PETITIONS PROTOCOL**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal Services which detailed a constitutional amendment related to the Petitions Protocol.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendation as set out in paragraph 2 of the report be approved and the current Constitution be amended.

19

## **ADOPTION OF STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a 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 the Local Plan documentation 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). The SCI sets out how the community and other stakeholders would be involved in the preparation of the GMSF

and provided an update to the SCI approved by Council on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015.



**RESOLVED** that the Statement of Community Involvement be adopted and published as Council Policy.

20

### **REVISION OF BYELAWS MADE UNDER SECTION 19 OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES & MUSEUMS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director, Cooperatives and Neighbourhoods regarding the Byelaws made under Section 19 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 related to the public use of facilities. The Byelaws were intended to help libraries deliver services in a safe and comfortable environment, safeguard property and make libraries pleasant places for everyone. A new model byelaw had been developed by the Society of Chief Librarians and approved by the Secretary of State.

The current byelaws had not been updated since 1985. The proposed revisions were in with the revised model and outlined in the report. An amendment was proposed to include: 17. 'A person shall not spit in the library, Museum or Art Gallery'. All further numbering was to be amended in line with the amendment.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. the byelaws made under Section 19 of the Public Libraries & Museums Act, 1964 be amended and updated as detailed in the report.
2. the byelaws detailed at Appendix B of the report be amended to include: 17. 'A person shall not spit in the library, Museum or Art Gallery' and all further numbering to be amended in line with the amendment.

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### **WELFARE REFORM - THEMATIC ANALYSIS: YOUNG PEOPLE**

Consideration was given to a report on the Government's Welfare Reforms which continued to have a significant impact on the borough both in terms of place (e.g. economy) and its people (e.g. financial resilience). The report was part of a series which was looking at the impact of welfare reform on the borough and was part of the Council's commitment to publishing data related to equality and demonstrated how it was informing the type of services the Council provided.

This report focussed on those aged 18 – 24 years old. The report identified seven reforms which were adversely impacting on the group disproportionately or had the potential to do so. The report also identified potential impacts on the age group and identified a number of services that were currently available to help mitigate some of the impacts and looked at current access levels of these services in terms of those aged 18 -24.

**RESOLVED** that the Welfare Reform Thematic Analysis related to young people be noted.

**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 9.36 pm