

Present: The Mayor – Councillor Heffernan (Chair)

Councillors Ahmad, Akhtar, A. Alexander, G. Alexander, Ali, Azad, Ball, M Bashforth, S Bashforth, Bates, Blyth, Briggs, Brock, Brownridge, Chadderton (left at Item 11), Chauhan, Dean, Dearden, Fielding, Garry, Gloster, Goodwin, Haque, Harkness, Harrison, Hewitt, Hudson, A Hussain, F Hussain, Iqbal, Jabbar, Kirkham, Klonowski, J Larkin, Malik, McCann, McLaren, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Price, Qumer, Rehman, Roberts, Salamat, Sheldon, Stretton, Sykes, Toor, Turner, Ur-Rehman, Williamson, Williams and Wrigglesworth

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

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

The following questions had been submitted:

1. Question asked by David McGealy:

“Oldham Community Radio 99.7fm has broadcast “all about Oldham” for the last 9 years and 9 months and if it can find the finance to pay the bills will continue for a minimum of another 5 years until March 2023.

To date we have broadcast every Council Meeting and Civic Event. These have included Freeman of the Borough Awards, Mayor Making Ceremonies, Civic Appreciation Awards, Council Annual Meetings, etc. Our broadcasts are very popular with residents of neighbouring Boroughs and we bring some of these into Oldham by inviting them to join us in a series of “Summer Strolls” (around Oldham), Also to visit various locations in Oldham. For example, Gallery Oldham and The Mayor’s Parlour. Our latest initiative has been to invite them to join us for a series “Silver Screenings” at the new Odeon Cinema in the Old Town Hall. We have increased the number attending these screening “six fold” and I am informed that last time they had to turn customers away as the screen was full!

Our Annual Listener Survey indicates that around 40,000 individuals listen to the station each week and of these 40% live outside Oldham. Even taking this “out of area listeners” into account the number of listeners seems very

large and we would rather be cautious and estimate the audience at twenty to twenty five thousand per week. Over this time frame the number of guests on-air must have run into the many thousands. The guests during the last week have included The Houghton Weavers, Chris Hamilton, U3A, Oldham Symphony Orchestra, Christian Aid, the Inter Faith Forum, A local Vet and a number of telephone guests – and this was a very quiet week! We were delighted to see “Warm Homes Oldham” receive a National Award for their campaign and feel delighted that we fully supported their campaign and were paid for our contribution.

While commenting on National Awards I am delighted that Oldham Community Radio 99.7fm were recently recipients of three National Community Radio Awards. Gold in Speech and Journalism, Bronze in Specialist Music and Highly Commended in “Station of the Year”. It is good to know that “Oldham Community Radio 99.7fm” is held in such high esteem within the Sector.

We have never had a negative comment on any of the contributions made by Oldham Community Radio 99.7fm to any of the campaigns we have been a part of over the years. Feedback has only ever been positive. Thus it was a tremendous shock and a huge financial blow that we discovered in late November that we had been “dropped” without warning from “Oldham’s 2016 Christmas Advertising Campaign”. The anticipated £3,000 was critical to our budget. This was less understandable as Oldham supports the ethos of “Love Where You Live”, “Go Oldham” and “Britain in Bloom” and “Shop”, “Spend” and “Support Local” are supposed to be integral to the Boroughs way forward!

My Questions:

1. Why were we “dropped” from the 2016 Christmas Campaign and not informed of this?
2. What are the advantages, to Oldham, of telling people in Wigan about, for example, the Christmas lights switch-on in Oldham?
3. To the best of my knowledge, every other one of the over 200 community radio stations in the UK has received payment for advertising their local council’s Christmas Campaign. Why is Oldham so different?
4. and finally, What more does Oldham Community Radio 99.7fm have to do to become a ‘part’ of Oldham’s Christmas Advertising Campaign?”

Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise responded that Mr. McGealy’s question and his previous email to all sixty councillors was based on a significant inaccuracy. Oldham Community Radio (OCR) had not been dropped from the Christmas campaign by the Council. The campaign was not Council-owned but was funded by the Town Centre Christmas Marketing Budget which had been cut by all partners. The campaign now used fewer communication channels based on intelligence from surveys on how people found out about the events. Money previously given

to OCR was not spent with Key 103 instead. The campaign had used Key 103 for many years as a successful commercial channel which could statistically prove its impact on residents and visitors to Oldham. Bus, Metrolink and road hoardings were also stopped this year and spend with the Chronicle was cut. It was unfair to blame the Council when the budget was not held by the Council. The Council did appreciate what Oldham Community Radio did and Mr. McGealy had been honoured with a Civic Appreciation Award last February. Since grant funding had stopped, the Council had also offered support in kind by waiving the costly rental charge for OCR's radio mast located on the Civic Centre. The Council was sympathetic to the financial predicament but it had to be understood that it was not practical to personally contact every channel to let them know if they were not being used on a campaign. It was clearly evidenced that the funding was untrue and the Leader was available to discuss any issues with Mr. McGealy.

2. Question received from Parish Councillor Paul Turner via Twitter:

“As there are a shortage of school places, what has OMBC put in place to cope if the house building in the GMSF goes ahead?”

Councillor Chadderton, Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years responded that the Council annually reviewed school place projections for the coming year and therefore the current projections did not take into account GMSF. The GMSF was only at initial consultation with the final plan due at the end of 2018. At the end of 2018 the Council would receive the plan. The concerns for Crompton and housing were shared, however, 1200 houses were not just going to 'pop up'. Planning permission would be needed and it was estimated that this would take years. The Council updated pupil projections annually and planning housing developments were taken into account.

3. Question received from May Winter via Twitter:

“I see there is a petition to get rid of Shaw parish council. How many signatures will OMBC need to disband?”

Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise responded that a petition may require a community governance review to be undertaken. The petition would have to set out at least one recommendation that the petitioners wanted the review to consider to be made. The petition would need to be signed by the requisite number of electors. In the area mentioned in the question, the petition would have to be signed by 7.5% of the electors in the parish area. The Council was not currently in receipt of a valid petition which triggered a community governance review. Should the Council receive a petition there was a requirement to

consult local people along with other bodies. The review would need to be completed in 12 months and the Council would need to take the consultation response into consideration. The decision would need to be approved by Council and the appropriate orders made.



4. Question received from Dr. Alison Mary Lees via Twitter:

“I’d like to know why we can’t have off-street parking in Acorn Street to improve safety of schoolchildren and old people?”

Councillor Fida Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, responded that the Council did not own any land adjacent to Acorn Street to create an off street car park. However, there was a car park on nearby Taylor Street at its junction with Mellor Street which was available for use.

5. Question received from Syed Maruf Ali via email:

“There have been a number of significant changes to the educational system in recent years. These include the expansion of the academies and Free Schools programme; the creation of University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools; the development of school to school support, including Teaching Schools, National / Local and Specialist Leaders of Education and National Leaders of Governance; and raised Ofsted expectations of schools, settings and Local Authorities.

A major initiative has been the introduction of the Pupil Premium. This is additional funding given to publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers. The government has extended this scheme to early years, with a pupil premium for all disadvantaged 3- and 4-year-olds and similar support for eligible two year olds.

Local Authorities retain a statutory duty under the 1996 Education Act ‘to promote high standards so that children and young people achieve well and fulfil their potential’. However, how Local Authorities carry out this role has had to respond to the wider changes in the educational system. For example, Local Authorities have no power of intervention in academies and Free Schools but do have a responsibility to know how well the children in those schools are doing and to take appropriate action if there is concern.

Do the Local Authority and Cllr's have any concerns in Werneth Ward for Primary and Secondary school?

As most of us are aware LA has no power to carry out direct monitoring in academies, which is the responsibility of the Trust. However, under the 1996 Education Act LA

can intervene if concerns has been raised by parents.

Has the LA and Cllr's for responsible for education had any discussions with School/Academies/parents in Werneth Ward regarding high standard of education, performance and attainment level and any action that School should take?

What support/funding does The Local Authority offers to schools and academies in Werneth ward to improvement the attainment level?"

Councillor Amanda Chadderton, Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years responded that the Council had an obligation to raise concerns about academies or free schools with the Regional Schools Commissioner. Concerns had been discussed about several academies such as Werneth, however, these issues could not be disclosed. The council met with academy leaders board but it was up to them to choose the support they accessed which included the school alliance.

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 Dean asked the following question:

“Could the Cabinet Member update me on the progress of the proposed housing development on the former Counthill School site? Local residents and ward Councillors were assured development would take place sometime ago.”

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Cooperatives responded that the formal process for the selection of an appropriate residential developer partner for the former Counthill School Site commenced in July 2016. Due to the high level of interest shown in the site, it had been necessary for a short-listing process to take place, which was concluded in September. Detailed proposals had subsequently been received from four parties in late November and these were being assessed. The Council would hopefully be in a position to confirm the preferred development partner early in the new year. There would be a requirement for a detailed planning application to be submitted prior to the commencement of the development on site during the course in 2017.

2. Councillor Adrian Alexander asked the following question:

“We have been waiting patiently for a decision on the Breeze Hill School site about whether it can be made

available for sport facilities for Springhead FC and various other sporting organisations. Is there any progress to report?”



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Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise responded that there had been on-going site investigations and viability appraisals taking place for confirmation of how exactly how much of the former Breezehill Site could be taken forward to provide much needed family homes in the area and these were scheduled to be completed by the end of January 2017. In the meantime, discussions had been ongoing with other interested parties if it was concluded that a recreational use was more appropriate for certain parts of the site. Officers had met with Springhead FC on two separate occasions to discuss Springhead FC's potential aspirations for the site and a further meeting was scheduled to take place. In the event that parts of the were to be made available for recreational uses, the Council would continue to work closely with interested parties for proposals to be drawn up that would result in viable and sustainable uses for the benefit of local communities.

3. Councillor Hewitt asked the following question:

“Does the Council recognise the real need for more primary school places in Saddleworth and across Oldham and what steps are being taken to meet this pressing need?”

Councillor Chadderton, Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years responded that the Council recognised the need for more places. Work had been undertaken in the last six months through a matrix system and the most preferable was the rebuild of Greenfield School. Public consultation was underway. If approved, 30 additional places would be provided. In relation to other areas, the new North Moor Academy offered 640 places. East Oldham was the largest planning area and a decision had been taken that this area was too large. The area would be split and further proposals made.

4. Councillor Harkness asked the following question:

“The Cabinet Member will be well aware of the recent disappointing news that the judicial review sought by The Save Diggle Action Group to prevent the new Saddleworth School from being located in Diggle will not now be heard until 2017.

Will the Cabinet Member agree with me that this decision represents yet another regrettable delay in providing an excellent new educational facility to pupils of secondary school age in Saddleworth and that it will involve this local authority in further considerable unnecessary expenditure in legal fees and court appearances?

Can the Cabinet Member please also tell me how much the construction of the new school will be put back as a

result, how this will impact on the timescale for its completion and readiness to accept new pupils, and if there are contingency plans for if the whole project falls apart?

My fear is that Saddleworth pupils will continue to have to receive their education for longer in buildings that are no longer fit for purpose and that are creaking at the seams, buildings that will eventually have to close leading to local children being bussed around the borough for a school place.

I am sure the Cabinet Member will agree with me that this decision prolongs the agony and uncertainty for pupils, parents and staff who all deserve better?"

Councillor Chadderton, Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years responded that the decision was disappointing and regrettable. In September this year the other schools included in that tranche had opened. The review would take place in January 2017. From past experience with the EFA, it was not certain when the Council would receive their response. It was agreed that Saddleworth School was not fit for purpose and that parts of the schools were 110 years old. Students should be taught in outstanding facilities along with Royton & Crompton and Hathershaw which were of the few that had not been rebuilt. With regard to costs and money, the Council would need to wait until the end of January.

5. Councillor Ali asked the following question:

"In Chadderton North, a number of our community groups are working extremely hard to tackle the issue of fly tipping within back street alleys. Resident groups are repeatedly telling us, whilst they make real efforts to keep the area free from fly tipping; there are a handful of individuals who continue to fly tip. Residents feel frustrated that their efforts go to waste, and clearly this damages their morale.

The situation in Chadderton North isn't too bad; however we are keen to keep the issue 'nipped in the bud'. District officers and Councillors are working extremely hard to 'improve awareness and change behaviours'.

I know the Council has a zero tolerance approach to fly tipping; however due to many internal changes it is not always clear the Council's role in dealing with the issue. I would like some assurance from the relevant cabinet member that resources will be prioritised to ensure 'unscrupulous behaviours' are fully investigated and more support provided to wards in 'raising awareness and changing behaviours' in relation to tackling fly tipping."

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Cooperatives sympathised with the concerns of the various community groups which operated in the area and advised she was grateful for the work the residents did in looking after the area. The Council had a 'zero tolerance' approach to flytipping and

prosecuted those responsible, but this could only be done if the Council knew who they were. The Council had invested in portable CCTV which would be distributed across the borough. This would be another piece of ammunition to assist in the identification of individuals and take serious action against them as the Council wanted to prevent this type of behaviour.

6. Councillor Malik asked the following question:

“Can the relevant cabinet member, please inform us when will the new showroom be open, how many jobs will be created by Jardine Motor Group and what job opportunities there will be for the local people.”

Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise responded that the 17 car showroom and 24 bay service workshop, which also offered a full aftersales and pre-delivery inspection service, was set to open in summer 2017. The new dealership would create more than 80 new jobs. Jardine had also confirmed that they were committed to the ‘Get Oldham Working’ campaign, and were looking forward to working with local colleges and supply chains.

7. Councillor Garry asked the following question:

“Given the recent revelations regarding sexual abuse of children within sports, especially football, can the relevant cabinet member assure me that children of Failsworth and children throughout the Oldham borough are sufficiently safeguarded.”

Councillor Harrison, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Safeguarding responded that sports clubs which played in structured leagues and competitions needed to be affiliated with their respective national governing body of sport. Within the affiliation process, clubs were required to have appropriate safeguarding policies in place and specifically sports coaches needed to have a DBS check. There could never be a guarantee that every child in the borough was safe from harm but assurances were provided that the Local Safeguarding Children Board ensured that all key agencies in Oldham which included the voluntary and community sector were safeguarding aware and had access to the training and guidance which made this happen. Work was undertaken with young people in schools which informed them of the risks and what they could do.

8. Councillor McCann asked the following question:

“During the recent floods it became apparent that the problem was made worse by water flowing from privately owned land onto roads, pavements and public footpaths due to the land drainage not being maintained.

I would like to ask if the Council has an active system to force private landowners to maintain sometimes substantial culverts and drains on their lands, and when these are not maintained, what enforcement action is then taken by this Council?"

Councillor Fida Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services responded that the recent flood event which had occurred on 21st November 2016 had been a combination of high rainfall (potentially one month's rainfall in one day) and the melting snow which had fallen on the hills during the previous weekend. This combination had caused a very sudden high increase of volume of water especially into the ordinary water culverts, of which at least two had become significantly surcharged, coming off the adjacent hills before falling into open water courses and main rivers which further raised already raised levels. The investigations and data gathering was still proceeding. Under the recent Flood and Water Management Act and the Land Drainage Act the Council had certain powers and duties such as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). This allowed the LLFA to enter private land under the act in order to carry out investigations and to compel private landowners to carry out works on water courses/culverts that may have become blocked for example on their land as they are the riparian owner where the watercourse passes through their land.

9. Councillor Dearden asked the following question:

"Could the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, please inform us of the progress that is being made with the 'Early Adopters' scheme for the integration of health and social care services and staff in Chadderton?"

Councillor Moores, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing responded that the Early Adopter of the integration of health and social care in Chadderton was progressing with a co-located team of community nurses and social care staff being in place before the end of December. Work had been completed which identified the staff who would make up the team and they had regular meetings. A co-located team were moving to Horton House and which were subject to IT works being completed to ensure staff had access to health and social care recording systems. Multi-Disciplinary meetings had taken place, coordinated plans for patients of Woodlands and CH Medical Practices developed which drew together nurses and social care staff and also Age UK, Early Help, Action Together, First Choice Homes staff as well as staff from the relevant GP practices. The integrated team were developing the new pathways, referral and allocation, assessment and care planning systems as part of the early adopter, and were being

supported with coaching and mentoring and regular reviews which ensured learning was captured.



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10. Councillor McLaren asked the following question:

“ASB on and around the Freehold Metrolink Stop is a cause of concern for local residents, could the relevant Cabinet Member please advise us what if any steps are being taken by Metrolink and GMP to resolve this issue?”

Councillor Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services responded that there was an ongoing multi-agency piece of work that addressed the issues linked to the Freehold Metrolink stop and the wider use of the Metrolink system. Staff from Metrolink were working closely with colleagues from the Council, Greater Manchester Police and TfGM. Funding had been provided to support some of the work by the Community Safety and Cohesion Partnership Board. Any persons identified as involved in anti-social behaviour would receive some form of intervention and/or punitive action.

11. Councillor Ur-Rehman asked the following question:

“With the onset of winter and the well-publicised pressures on A&E services, can the Cabinet Member assure us that the primary health care provision in my Ward are fit for purpose?”

Councillor Moores, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing responded that the NHS Oldham CCG and Oldham Council had an annual programme in place, named ‘Choose Well’ which provided guidance to people in need of care to find the right source of that care. That could sometimes mean attending the local pharmacist for advice on appropriate medication for minor ailments. The NHS Choices Service was also available for advice by telephone and via the internet. If residents in Medlock Vale required medical attention a number of practices were available which included Werneth Medical Practice, Werneth Primary Care Centre and the Integrated Care Centre. The CCG had a commitment to improve the quality of primary care services and had a year round programme to support the delivery of high quality primary care in Oldham. The Hill Top Surgery which served residents in Fitton Hill, Hathershaw and Bardsley was recently rated outstanding. Professor Steve Hill, Chief Inspector of General Practice, said the Hill Top Surgery was one of the most inspirational GP surgeries he had visited. This was a real achievement and fantastic resource for the people of Oldham.

12. Councillor Sheldon asked a question related to the new pedestrian refuge at Oaklands Road and Oldham Road, Grasscroft and the new layout. The new island reduced the width of the lanes at the Oldham bound side which

was noticeable and traffic had to slow down to pass through. The new road layout may cause an accident especially with larger sized vehicles. He asked the relevant Cabinet Member to check on the concerns raised.

Councillor Fida Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, responded that he would look into these concerns and respond to Councillor Sheldon.

13. Councillor Fielding asked the following question:

“In Failsworth West there is an open area of land bounded by Oldham Road, Heywood Street and Hardman Street which is in the ownership of the Council. For a long time this had been left unkempt and local residents had contacted me on numerous occasions to arrange for the Council to cut the grass and clear up fly tipping that was taking place. Thankfully a rolling programme of maintenance has now been drawn up. However, given that this plot occupies a strategic location on the main A62 corridor, what steps are the Council taking to develop a long term plan for this land? In my view it represents a prime development opportunity and, were it to be developed, this would remove the revenue costs of maintenance that the Council currently incurs and could also potentially provide some much needed housing in the local area.”

Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise responded that Council officers were working hard on sites in order to obtain a comprehensive regeneration of the area. The Council was also giving consideration of options of the Heywood/Hardman Street site in isolation which would be taken to the market in the new year with works to commence as soon as possible.

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

RESOLVED that the questions and the responses provided be noted.

2 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Ames, Cosgrove, T. Larkin, McMahan and Shuttleworth.

3 **TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 9TH NOVEMBER 2016 BE SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 9th November 2016 be approved as a correct record.

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 19b by virtue of his appointment to the MioCare Board and Unity Partnership Board and at Item 17 by virtue of family members affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Hewitt declared a prejudicial interest at Item 12 by virtue of his employment by a trade union. Councillor Hewitt left the Chamber during this item and took no part in the discussion or vote thereon.

Councillor Brock declared a pecuniary interest at Item 12 by virtue of her partner being employed by the local authority. Councillor Brock left the Chamber during this item and took no part in the discussion or vote thereon.

Councillor Harrison declared a personal interest at Item 19b by virtue of her appointment to the MioCare Board at Item 17 by virtue of family members affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Jabbar declared a personal interest at Item 19b by virtue of his appointment to the Unity Partnership Board and at Item 17 by virtue of family members affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Chauhan declared a personal interest at Item 19b by virtue of his appointment to the MioCare Board.

Councillor Dean declared a personal interest at Item 19b by virtue of his appointment to the Unity Partnership Board and at Item 17 by virtue of family members affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Stretton declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of being affected by the pension changes and at item 19b by virtue of her appointment to the Unity Partnership Board.

Councillor Wrigglesworth declared a personal interest at Item 12 by virtue of her appointment to the Positive Steps Board and the Domestic Violence Strategic Committee and at Item 17 by virtue of being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Roberts declared a personal interest at Item 12 by virtue of her appointment to the Positive Steps and the Oldham Play Action Group and at Item 17 by virtue of being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Ginny Alexander declared a personal interest at Item 19b by virtue of her appointment to the MioCare Board and at Item 17 by virtue of being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Fielding declared a personal interest at Item 12 by virtue of his appointment to the Positive Steps Board and at Item 17 by virtue of family members being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Chadderton declared a personal interest at Item 12 by virtue of her appointment to the Positive Steps Board.

Councillor Sykes declared a personal interest at Item 19b by virtue of his appointment to the Unity Partnership Board.

Councillor Harkness declared a personal interest at Item 12 by virtue of his appointment to the Positive Steps Board.

Councillor Williamson declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Murphy declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of family members being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Turner declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Gloster declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of family members being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Blyth declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of family members being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Aftab Hussain declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of family members being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Akhtar declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of family members being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Moores declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of family members being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Ball declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Hudson declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of family members being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Sheldon declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of family members being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor McLaren declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of family members being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Marie Bashforth declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Garry declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor James Larkin declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of family members being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Dearden declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Qumer declared a personal interest at Item 17 by virtue of family members being affected by the pension changes.

Councillor Price declared a personal interest at Item 12 by virtue of her appointment to the Oldham Community Leisure Ltd. Management Committee.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

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

There were no communications related to the business of Council.

7 **TO RECEIVE AND NOTE PETITIONS RECEIVED**

RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

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

Health and Wellbeing

Proposal to Close the Link Centre received 28 November 2016 with 151 signatures (Ref: 2016-17).

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

8

OUTSTANDING BUSINESS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

Motion 1

Councillor Moores MOVED and Councillor Harrison SECONDED the following motion:

“The Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association has launched a Charter to gain support as the Association works towards their vision of securing the right care, at the right time and in the right place for those who suffer with MND, and their carers. Achieving quality of life, dignity and respect for people with MND and their carers must be something we strive for, and adopting the Charter will help us to understand and support these people.

Councillor Williamson MOVED and Councillor McCann SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

“Insert before current text.

‘This Council notes that Motor Neurone Disease (MND) is an incurable, fatal, and rapidly progressing disease that affects the brain and spinal cord. MND kills six people per day in the UK with a third of sufferers dying within one year of diagnosis.’

And at end after current text:

‘Council resolves to:

- Adopt the Charter and publicise the fact that we have adopted it on our website
- Issue the ‘Motor Neurone Disease: a guide for councillors’ booklet to all elected members
- Distribute the resources made available by the MND Association to all staff supporting people with MND or their carers
- Ask the Health and Well-being Board to identify how the Council can best support people with MND, and their carers, in this borough.

- Ask the Board to bring a report with its recommendations back to Full Council.'



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Amended motion to read:

'This Council notes that Motor Neurone Disease (MND) is an incurable, fatal, and rapidly progressing disease that affects the brain and spinal cord. MND kills six people per day in the UK with a third of sufferers dying within one year of diagnosis. The Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association has launched a Charter to gain support as the Association works towards their vision of securing the right care, at the right time and in the right place for those who suffer with MND, and their carers. Achieving quality of life, dignity and respect for people with MND and their carers must be something we strive for, and adopting the Charter will help us understand and support these people. We call on this council to adopt the MND Charter and to help positively influence the lives of people living with MND in Oldham.'

Councillor Moores exercised his right of reply

Councillor Williamson exercised her right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT.

On being put the vote, 9 were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT and 46 votes were cast AGAINST with 0 ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

Councillor Moores exercised his right of reply.

On being put the vote, the ORIGINAL MOTION was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

RESOLVED that the MND Charter be adopted to help positively influence the lives of people living with MND in Oldham.

9 **YOUTH COUNCIL**

There were no items submitted by the Youth Council.

10 **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BUDGET CABINET MEETING HELD ON 5TH DECEMBER 2016**

The draft minutes of the Budget Cabinet meeting held on 5th December 2016 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the Budget Cabinet Meeting held on 5th December 2016 be noted.

11 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017/18 TO 2020/21 - POLICY LANDSCAPE AND FORECAST BUDGET GAP UPDATE**

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Stretton SECONDED the report of the Director of Finance which provided an update on the latest position with regard to the Council's forecasted Budget Cap for 2017/18 to 2020/21.



In accordance with the recommendation from Cabinet, the report advised Council of the key financial challenges and issues which would be faced by the Council over the period 2017/18 to 2020/21 covered by the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and advised of updated budget reduction requirements. The report also included an update on the national policy landscape within which the Council operated and included details of the proposed major changes to the Local Government Finance Regime with the future introduction of 100% Business Rates retention. The Council had submitted an Efficiency Plan to Government in response to an initiative in order to secure certainty related to the Revenue Support Grant funding for 2016/17 to 2019/20. Based on current information, trends and demand pressures, the Council would have to continue to make considerable budget reductions over the MTFS period which were currently forecasted to be £20.315m for 2017/18 rising to a cumulative sum of £53.823m for 2020/21.

The risks and uncertainties associated with the determination of the budget reduction requirement were outlined in the report.

The Options/Alternatives considered were:

- Option 1 – To accept the assumptions and resulting financial forecasts presented at Section 4 of the report.
- Option 2 – To propose amendments to the assumptions which would change the resulting budget gap and financial forecasts.

RESOLVED that:

1. The financial forecasts and budget gap estimates for 2017/18 to 2020/21, and the key issues to be addressed in formulating a response to the financial challenges faced by the Council be endorsed.
2. Council noted that the budget reduction target may be revised early in 2017 in accordance with local priorities and Government funding and policy announcements together with new developments related to the risks and uncertainties as set out in Section 5 of the report.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017/18 TO 2020/21 - ADMINISTRATION BUDGET PROPOSALS

RESOLVED that Council Procedure 10.7 (Rules of Debate) be suspended to enable the Deputy Leader of the Council to exceed the time limit for his contribution in moving the Administration Budget to 15 minutes and the Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition to 10 minutes. All other speakers would be limited to 4 minutes.

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Stretton SECONDED the report of the Director of Finance which set out the Administration's detailed Phase 1 budget reduction proposals for the financial year 2017/18. The report presented the Administration's first phase of detailed proposals towards bridging the 2017/18 gap of £20.315m. As part of the development and consultation process for proposals, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee met on 10th November 2016 and reviewed 44 proposals with a total value of £7.012m. Cabinet gave consideration to the proposals which resulted in:

- A total of £6.147m of Phase 1 2017/18 budget reduction proposals being commended to Council for approval.
- Two proposals being noted to allow time for completion of consultation.
- Five proposals being deferred to allow for additional information to be presented to PVFM in January 2017.

The proposals commended to Council totalled £6.147m which left a balance of £14.168m still to be addressed for 2017/18.

There was further financial information yet to be received from Government in order for the final budget position to be determined. In addition, the next stage in closing the budget gap, a S188 notice was issued on 28 November 2016 and included proposals which totalled £5.466 and a FTE impact of 12. These proposals would be presented to PVFM in January. The final budget report would be presented to Council on 1st March 2017.

Councillor Jabbar expressed thanks to Members and officers for their support in preparation of the proposals.

Options/Alternatives:

Option 1 – Council approve the budget reduction proposals as detailed at Appendix 1 to the value of £6.147m.

Option 2 – Council request that further work was undertaken on some or all of the budget reduction proposals and that a decision on proposals was deferred.

Councillor McCann spoke in support of the report.

Councillor Fielding spoke in support of the report.

Councillor Mushtaq spoke in support of the report.

Councillor Ahmad spoke in support of the report.

Councillor Williams spoke in support of the report.

Councillor Steven Bashforth spoke in support of the report.

Councillor Harrison spoke in support of the report.

Councillor Ur-Rehman spoke in support of the report.

Councillor Blyth spoke in support of the report.

Councillor Jabbar exercised his right of reply.

RESOLVED that:

1. The £6.147m of detailed budget reduction proposals presented in summary at Appendix 1 and as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.
2. the information contained within the Equality Impact Assessments also included at Appendix 2 which supported the Phase 1 proposals be taken into consideration.
3. the consultation responses from Saddleworth and Shaw & Crompton Parish Councils included at Appendices 3b and 4B of the report be noted.
4. the amended information as distributed to Councillors be noted.

NOTES:

1. Councillor Hewitt declared a prejudicial interest at this time by virtue of his employment with a trade union. He left the Chamber during this item and did not participate in the discussion or vote thereon.
2. Councillor Brock declared a pecuniary interest at this time by virtue of her partner's employment with the Council. She left the Chamber during this item and did not participate in the discussion or vote thereon.

13

TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR REVIEW 2016/17

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Stretton SECONDED a report of the Director of Finance which advised of the performance of the Treasury Management function of the Council for the first half of 2016/17 and provided a comparison of performance against the 2016/17 Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators.

The Council was required to consider the performance of the Treasury Management function in order to comply with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Treasury Management Revised Code of Practice. The report set out the key Treasury Management issues which were:

- An economic update for the first six months of 2016/17;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- The Council's capital expenditure (prudential indicators);
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2016/17;
- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2016/17;
- Whether there had been now debt rescheduling undertaken during 2016/17; and
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2016/17.

Options/Alternatives

In order that the Council complied with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council had no option other than to consider and approve the contents of the report. Therefore no options/alternatives were presented.



RESOLVED that:

1. The Treasury Management activity for the first half of the financial year 2016/17 and the projected outturn position be approved.
2. The amendments to both the Authorised and Operational Boundary for external debt as set out in the table at Section 2.4.5 of the report be approved.
3. The Amendments to the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) as set out in the table at Section 2.4.5 be approved.
4. The inclusion of Green Energy Bonds as an alternative investment, detailed in Sections 2.5.21 and 2.5.22 of the report be approved.
5. The purchase of LEP Loan Notes included within Section 2.5.23-24 of the report be noted.

14

PROPOSED COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2017/18

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Stretton SECONDED a report of the Director of Finance which sought approval of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18.

The legislation, as detailed in the Local Government Finance Act 2012, placed a requirement that each year a Billing Authority must formally give consideration to revising its Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme. In order to do this with the timescale set out in legislation, it was necessary for full Council to agree the scheme before 31st January 2017. The Council introduced a CTR Scheme from 1 April 2013 and last revised the scheme from 1 April 2015.

The report set out two options for consideration related to the 2017/18 CTR Scheme:

1. Maintain the current scheme which may have financial, software and administrative implications.
2. Revise the present Council Tax Reduction Scheme to align to the Housing Benefit Regulation 2006 as amended. This would allow any future planned Welfare Reform changes to be updated within the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, without the need for further consideration.

Cabinet gave consideration to the report which set out the options on 5th December 2016. After consideration of all key facts and available information, Cabinet recommended that Council approve that no change be made to the current CTR Scheme and the scheme which operated in 2016/17 be continued for 2017/18.

Councillor McCann spoke in support of the report.

RESOLVED that the 2017/18 Council Tax Reduction Scheme not be changed from the scheme in operation during 2016/17.

LEADER AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

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

Question 1:

“My first question of the Leader tonight again relates to the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.

I make no apology for it, because in my part of the world this is undoubtedly the single most important local issue to our citizens. I was surprised by the response of the Leader last time.

She talked of the need for more homes in our Borough and more aspirational homes in our Borough – something I do not disagree with – but there was no recognition that the growth and pain should be shared across the Borough, rather than concentrated in one corner of it!

I would like to reiterate that the land earmarked to build an awful lot of these new homes is in Shaw, in Crompton and in Royton. It may be that only three percent of the Borough’s Green Belt is being lost, but the lion’s share of that amount is being lost is in the wards represented by myself and my colleagues for Shaw, Crompton and Royton.

Under the proposals outlined under the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, over 3000 new homes will be built on green field sites in Shaw and Crompton alone!

Vast swathes of Green Belt stretching from the rear of Dunwood Park to Burnage will be lost forever to bricks, concrete and tarmac.

3,000 new homes built in two wards in which, as a consequence of the withdrawal of local facilities or underinvestment, we have primary schools that are already overcrowded and full; a secondary school that is falling apart; a dilapidated health centre that is near cardiac arrest; no swimming facilities or dry leisure provision; precious few youth facilities and no municipal tip.

3,000 new homes that are built for growing families will need more primary and secondary school places; more GPs and dentists; and new highways and more buses and trams to get them about their daily business. And doesn’t the decision not to replace Crompton Pool and Gym now look a little short-sighted given the number of new young residents that will need to learn to swim and the number of adults that will want to keep fit?

More and more of my constituents are frankly getting more and more fearful and angry about these proposals. This frustration was reflected in the fact that more than 200 residents turned up recently to a public consultation and we have had to organise a second event tomorrow, Thursday 15 December.

My question tonight is in three parts.

I would firstly like to ask the Leader whether she really is convinced that there is a need for such a large land grab of Green Belt to build so many homes and such an increase in industrial provision in our Borough? And if the answer is yes, why is it that the lion’s share of that burden is placed upon Shaw, Crompton and Royton rather than apportioned out with other parts of the Borough having a Fair Share?

And lastly would the Leader agree with me that we first need to develop on brown field land, on land with existing planning permission for housing and on unloved derelict sites, and also bring back empty homes into occupation and convert empty factories and mills into flats, before we look to touch any part of our precious Green Belt and Green Spaces?”

Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council responded by saying she was convinced investment was required to build more homes in the Borough due to the failure of investment in the Borough over a number of years. The Leader was pleased that residents were attending consultation events and as a result of the consultation, proposals could possibly change.

As for other parts of the borough, significant schemes were planned such as Foxdenton. Clarification would be sought following the closing of the consultation and 12,000 homes would not just appear in the Borough overnight. It was not to be forgotten that there would still be development across the borough because developers would bring forward sites that were not included in the suggested strategic sites being brought forward if the Borough didn't have strategic proposals in place, the Council would be left open to development by appeal. The outcome of the consultation would need to be considered before any decisions were made. The Leader agreed to the points on prioritising brownfield sites and those sites which already had planning permission being developed first.

Question 2:

“In July 2013, I asked the then Leader of the Council to join me in backing Oldham's live music and comedy scene. At that time, the former Castle Pub, a well-known music venue, had just closed on Union Street but there was still a vibrant music scene with six venues for live performances in the town centre. With the recent bad news that Marks and Spencer will not be joining us at Prince's Gate, we need to highlight the positive things that Oldham has to offer.

With the opening of the new Cinema complex and a new Coliseum Theatre complex on the way, our night-time leisure offer is being transformed. No longer is Yorkshire Street and Union Street like the Wild West by night – instead we have cafés and bars that are safe for families and couples to visit after dark. So let's celebrate that.

This presents us with the opportunity to showcase the best of what Oldham has to offer – shopping or a visit to our Gallery or Museum during the day, a bite to eat in the early evening in the restaurants in Parliament Square or the Independent Quarter, a performance at the Theatre, and then maybe the opportunity to stay on into the late evening for a drink or two in a real ale pub and the chance to listen to some live music or a comedy show. Oldham potentially offers the perfect day out and; with the Metrolink network now being even more extensive and trams more frequent; it is possible for people to visit this Borough from every part of Greater Manchester. We need to shout about that. So now is the time to revisit how we promote the Borough.

As part of a new tourism strategy can I ask the Leader to ask officers to produce a brochure, or brochures if one is not enough, of real ale pubs and live music and comedy venues around the Borough with their links to public transport? And that this information is made available in print, web and an app.



Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council welcomed the positive comments about the new cinema complex and plans for the Coliseum. The Deputy Cabinet Member Economy and Enterprise portfolio contained Tourism and Events and the Deputy Cabinet Member would take the comments on board which were entirely appropriate. The Borough did have a lot to offer and it should be shouted about.

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 Hewitt asked the following question:

“A new household benefit cap was introduced in November, can the relevant cabinet member please tell us how many people in Oldham will be effected by this change and also what support can be offered to these residents who have had their benefits cut yet again.”

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and HR responded on the latest installation of welfare reform because of the 2012 Act and added that 520 households had been impacted by the latest implementation of the caps. In 2012, during the first phase Oldhamers lost out on millions of pounds which had a major impact. In terms of support, the Council had a dedicated welfare rights team who could be contacted on 0161 770 6655. The Council would do what it could to support those impacted by welfare reform. The implementation meant that residents would not be able to pay rent, council tax or for food. The Government was blind as to the impact the changes had.

2. Councillor Toor asked the following question:

“The new cinema in our Old Town Hall is definitely a breath of fresh air for our wonderful town and its lovely people. Lots of families are using it and spending locally. Parking seems to be an issue for some people. They are still not sure where to park. If it's a 2 or three hour parking facility offered by the council then they still can't enjoy it fully due to the threat of getting a parking ticket. They can't enjoy their movie or even the food facilities nearby. Especially if a family come to watch a film then a single parent can't really leave the small kids in the cinema on their own and run for parking ticket or drag the whole family with them to put some money in the ticket

machine. Can relevant cabinet member clarify the parking situation please?”

Councillor Fida Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services responded that officers would speak to the Odeon and ask them to advertise the fact that there was parking at the Town Square. Visitors to the cinema or new restaurants were entitled to discounted parking for up to four hours at £2 and free parking after 6.00 p.m. The discounted parking ticket also applied to the restaurants at the Old Town Hall.



3. Councillor James Larkin asked the following question:

“Natwest has recently announced it will be closing several branches in the borough, including the one in Royton. Whenever I have used this bank, it has always had a queue of people waiting to be served. The branch in Oldham Town Centre is already very very busy. Could the relevant Cabinet Member join me in asking Natwest to think again, particularly given the large number of local residents who are older and less likely to want to conduct their banking on-line and the increasing footfall in the Royton precinct following the opening of LIDL and Boyes.”

Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise responded that the Council had been working hard to secure quality investment in Royton Town Centre over recent years, including the facilitation of the new Lidl Store which opened earlier this year. The investment would continue with planned improvement works to Royton Town Hall and by working closely with the new owners of the Royton Precinct. The Leader would write to Natwest setting out these points and ask them to reconsider this decision with a view to retaining this valued facility for the benefit of local residents.

4. Councillor Turner asked the following question:

“Rochdale Council has recently announced its intention to automatically issue library membership cards to all primary aged pupils when they start school. This seems an eminently sensible way to encourage membership and use of our public libraries from an early age – a habit I would hope lasts a lifetime. Can I ask the Cabinet Member whether we can also adopt this idea to help promote the virtues, and wonders, of libraries to our youngest readers?”

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Cooperative responded that she agreed on the importance of libraries support reading from an early age. Oldham had taken part in national reading initiatives such as Book Start which were

embedded into Oldham's Library Programme. The Council did not currently provide an automatic library membership scheme and would explore how this could be developed. The Council would want to link any scheme to the existing programme that included Reception Reads which focussed on developing a love of reading and regular library use with children aged four years. This would ensure the best use of any resources directed to automatic enrolment and give the scheme the best chance to make an impact on young lives.

5. Councillor Goodwin asked the following question:

“There is the odd one within this Chamber who seems to have relished the opportunity of constantly being critical of the redevelopment of the former Town Hall and because of this no doubt also the businesses that have come in to Oldham, to say nothing of the jobs that have been created and the overall contribution to the reinvigoration of the borough.

Does the Leader agree with me that the response from the good people of Oldham at the formal opening of the complex on the night of 21st October demonstrates just how out of touch some members are?”

Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise responded that she agreed that the development had had a fantastic impact on Oldham. Molino Lounge, Nando's and Gourmet Burger Kitchen had opened and the companies had put significant investment into the new restaurants. The feedback from local businesses was that footfall and trade had increased following the opening of the Odeon cinema and restaurants. Recruitment following the Old Town Hall transformation was:

- Odeon Cinema/Costa/Cleaning Company – 70 jobs created; 55 filled with Oldham residents
- Molino Lounge – 20 jobs created; 15 filled with Oldham residents
- Gourmet Burger Kitchen – 25 jobs created; 12 filled with Oldham residents
- Total: 115 jobs created; 82 filled with Oldham residents.

6. Councillor Roberts asked the following question:

“The government's children and social work bill proposes allowing councils to request specific exemptions from legislation and statutory guidance to allow them to 'innovate' to improve children's experiences of being looked after by the local authority. Our Corporate Parenting role is one of any councillors most serious responsibilities. Does the Cabinet Member feel that allowing a local authority to effectively opt out of many of the current regulations put in place to safeguard children

is an opportunity to improve, or a threat to, the wellbeing of children in our care?”



Councillor Harrison, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Safeguarding responded that Oldham Council took its responsibilities as a Corporate Parent very seriously and those responsibilities extended across elected members, council officers and partner agencies. The bedrock of this approach was how the voices of those young people who were currently looked after and those who had left local authority care had been listened to.

As an example, the Council had held the Annual Corporate Parenting Conference on 17th November and young people shared their experiences of Oldham's care system to help improve the support given to care leavers. The Children and Social Work Bill put additional proposed requirements on local authorities and their partners and clearly set out the corporate parenting principles by which the Council and its partners should operate. The Bill's proposal around the 'power to test different ways of working' was, according to the government partly informed by what young people had been saying about care planning and review processes however there had been widespread concerns at the implications. It needed to be noted that the clause in the Bill regarding requests for exemption from statutory requirements was rejected by the House of Lords and had been removed. The clause in question did state that any request by a local authority to seek exemption would require local consultation before formal submission to the Secretary of State for consideration. In Oldham, the implications of the Bill would be carefully considered as it progressed and would not act against the best interests of looked after children.

7. Councillor Fielding asked the following question:

“The Council has taken the wise decision to support independent local businesses by operating a business improvement grant scheme. I am particularly pleased that, after their success in Oldham Town Centre, these grants were rolled out to other areas of the Borough, including to businesses along the A62 corridor through Failsworth. This scheme has helped to support the small businesses that are the backbone of our local economy and has also ensured the continued vibrancy and unique identity of our local shopping parade. Could the Cabinet Member please update Council with the key headlines from the implementation of this scheme in Failsworth?”

Councillor Jean Stretton, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise responded that independent businesses were particularly important to the District Centres where they helped to create a strong sense of local identity and customer loyalty and trust. District Centres were often the location for family

businesses that had been trading for long periods of time – many of them for a number of decades. Improvements to the exterior of key buildings which included fascia's and shop fronts could both uplift an area and the visitor's perception of the District Centre and assisted in attracting new independents. Discretionary grants of 50% of the eligible costs of improvements up to a maximum of £3,000 had originally been made available. A further report went to Cabinet on 21 March 2016 which sought an increase in the maximum grant from £3,000 to £8,000 following a request from the local grant review panels. The report was approved and the grant documentation updated that reflected the increase in the maximum grant available. Local grant review panels consisted of a selection of ward members for the area review grant applications and provided recommendations as to whether the applications received were to be approved, varied or rejected. Five grants had been awarded in the Failsworth A62 corridor which totalled £16,500 and four of these grants had been paid which totalled £12,000. One approved grant planned to implement the improvement work to the shop front in Spring 2017. Completed grant funded works included the installation of disabled W.C. facilities, installation of a footbridge to access the upper floor of a restaurant, provision of electrical supply and new windows and doors to premises that were vacant. There had been a lot of interest in the grant scheme and plenty of enquiries had been received. A mail out to all business in the eligible area was programmed for January 2017.

8. Councillor Gloster asked the following question:

“Can the Cabinet Member please tell me if this Council as a Living Wage Employer will be increasing the minimum wage for all staff to £8.45 per hour from April 2017 in line with the recommendations of the National Living Wage Foundation? And will the Cabinet Member also update this Chamber on the progress made by this Council since approving a motion in April that we should seek accreditation as a Living Wage Employers?”

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and HR responded that the recommendations of the National Living Wage foundation had been implemented last April and it was intended going forward a further increase would be implemented from 1st April next year. There was a need to understand the financial implications. The Council was committed to supporting low paid employees. This was one of the first initiatives of the Administration when they came into power in 2011.

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

RESOLVED that the questions and responses provided be noted.

16

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE UNDERMENTIONED DATES, INCLUDING THE ATTACHED LIST OF URGENT KEY DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL, AND TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR OBSERVATIONS ON ANY ITEMS WITHIN THE MINUTES FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE CABINET, AND RECEIVE RESPONSES FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 17th October 2016 and 21st November 2016 were submitted.

Members raised the following questions:

1. Councillor Blyth – Cabinet Meeting, 21st November 2016, Item 8: Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme 2016/17 Quarter 2 – September 2016. Councillor Blyth asked that now Marks and Spencer had pulled out of Prince’s Gate after assurances that it was on track, how were negotiations on the development and were any other stores filling the void? Were there any abortive costs regarding preparatory work and land deals for the Council should the development not go ahead and if there were any compensation clauses in place?

Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise advised the meeting that the answer provided at the last Council meeting regarding Marks and Spencer was correct at that point in time. There was still active consultation that week with the contractors. It was regrettable that Marks and Spencer had not chosen to build an M&S Store in Oldham, however, the Council would meet with M&S again on the prospect of a ‘Simply Food’ store. The Council would do its level best as there were sites that could serve that purpose. Other parties were still interested. The whole point of Prince’s Gate was as a new development and the Council would do its best to attract quality development to that site. There were no compensation clauses in the agreement.

2. Councillor McCann – Cabinet Meeting, 21st November 2016, Item 6 – Proposal to Expand Greenfield CP – Pre-Publication Consultation Responses. Councillor McCann thanked the administration for the new school to replace a 100 year old and cramped building. The school had been rated excellent. Not only would Greenfield have a new school worthy of the teachers and pupils of the 21st century, but also have a new sports field which was usable. The consultation was 58 in favour and 26 against. Councillor McCann asked if the target date of

2018 was still there and if contracting was still on target and still final decisions to be made?



Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance and HR, advised the meeting that he was delighted in the support and was committed to investment in every part of the borough. Councillor Jabbar confirmed that the Council was committed to the scheme and it was hoped to be delivered by September 2018, however, this would depend on the consultation and planning was concluded. This Administration was keen on delivering the Greenfield Primary School by that area due to the pressure in that area and was confident that the school would be delivered in the timeframe.

3. Councillor Harkness – Cabinet Meeting, 21st November 2016, Item 9: Shared Information Management and Governance Centre of Excellence. Councillor Harkness asked if there was a rough estimate of savings with this item.

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance and HR, responded by advising Councillor Harkness that he was not able to provide an exact figure, but it was not large. This was to bring services between Oldham and Rochdale together for the creation of a strong resilient team going forward in an important and complex area and addressed capacity. Councillor Jabbar further responded that a detailed response would be provided to Councillor Harkness.

RESOLVED that:

1. The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 17th October 2016 and 21st November 2016 be noted.
2. The questions and responses on the Cabinet minutes be noted.

17

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Motion 1

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor McCann SECONDED the following motion:

“Local Government has experienced a significant reduction in funding since 2009/10 and the introduction of the Government’s austerity regime. According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies, since 2009/10 there has been a real terms cut in local government spending across England of 22%. Here in Oldham we have fared much worse with a real terms cut of more than 42%. At the same time there has been a huge increase in demand for services, particularly in social care. The Council has responded to this massive challenge by competently and

efficiently redesigning many of its services to minimise the impact on citizens of Oldham.

This Council notes with disappointment the Chancellor's 2016 Autumn Statement in which he commented that higher spending by local authorities is one of the causes of a weaker economic outlook.

This Council believes that the Chancellor should have used his Statement to address pressing concerns in:

- The funding of Adult Social Care – the cuts made by central government have pushed social care to crisis point with knock on effects in the NHS as people cannot be safely discharged home. While a further increase to the National Living Wage is welcome, unless this is fully funded, it just increases pressure on council budgets and the viability of the private care sector.
- The benefits system. Cuts already agreed by government and not reversed will have a devastating impact on many Oldham residents.
- Providing more affordable and social housing and addressing homelessness and poor housing conditions.

The Autumn Statement provided new money for grammar schools, a stately home and reduced corporation tax.

Councillor Hudson spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Jabbar exercised his right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the MOTION.

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

RESOLVED that:

1. The borough's three MP's be written to, to urge them to take every opportunity to challenge the Government's approach to public spending.
2. Council would work through the LGA to push the case for the urgent need to put social care on a sound financial footing.
3. Support provided to Oldham's residents be continued, for example through the Welfare Rights Service, to do what could be to alleviate the difficulties faced by many of our residents.

Motion 2:

Councillor Toor MOVED and Councillor Garry SECONDED the following motion:

“This Council notes that hundreds of thousands of women had significant pension changes imposed on them by the Pensions Acts of 1995 and 2011 but were not notified of the changes until relatively recently. Some women were not notified until two years ago of a six-year increase in pension age. Women born in the 1950s are bearing a disproportionate cost of Conservative plans to reduce state spending. Many women born in the 1950s

are living in hardship. Retirement plans have been shattered with devastating consequences. Many of these women are caring for elderly relatives, providing childcare for grandchildren, or suffer discrimination in the workplace so struggle to find employment. Women born in this decade are suffering financially due to the Tories' ideological drive to reduce the cost of the state. These women have worked hard, raised families and paid their tax and national insurance with the expectation that they would be financially secure after finishing work. It is not the pension age itself that is disputed – it is widely accepted that women and men should retire at the same time. The issue is that the rise in the women's state pension age has been too rapid and has happened without sufficient notice being given to the women affected.

The Council calls on the Government to make fair transitional arrangements for all women born on or after 6th April 1951 who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the State Pension Age they were not told about until it was too late to make alternative arrangements.

Councillor Bates spoke in support of the motion.
Councillor Turner spoke in support of the motion.
Councillor Roberts spoke in support of the motion.
Councillor Chauhan spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Toor did not exercise her right of reply

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

RESOLVED that 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.

Motion 3

Councillor Goodwin MOVED and Councillor Williams SECONDED the following motion:

“This Council notes:

- The Government has recently changed the guidance to Building Regulations whereby they do not require the installation of Fire Suppression Systems to be fitted into new schools.
- It was reported there were more than 600 fires in British schools last year and Arson was suspected in 40% of cases. According to insurers, each large fire causes an average of £1.5million of damage, and that, where fitted, sprinklers pay for themselves in lower premiums.
- The core objective of the Revised Building Bulletin 100 is to simplify the guidance. However, in the process, it has removed the expectation that all new schools (except for low risk schools) will be protected from fire with automatic sprinklers. The benefits of Fire Suppression, extensively

and emphatically documented in the foreword of the current BB100, by the then Minister of State for Schools, have been erased from the revised BB100, with no mention made of sprinklers at all. This has taken place at a time when new schools in Scotland and Wales will have automatic sprinklers installed.

- There has been no advanced notice, or prior indication of this alarming change, which is, strongly rejected across the Fire Sector, The Fire Sector Federation, the Fire Protection Association and the Arson Prevention Bureau.

This Council believes that

- This is a retrograde step that does not make sense. Sprinklers do not just save lives, they prevent fires from spreading and causing significant disruption to children's education. They are supported by CFOA, teachers and the LGA.
- This change of policy is a false economy as the cost of increased insurance premiums and the damage caused by fire, outweighs that of the installation of sprinklers.
- This is also remarkably out of step with the rest of Great Britain. In Scotland and Wales new schools are fitted with sprinklers. Should children in England be educated in schools with a lower safety standard than those in our neighbouring devolved administrations?"

AMENDMENT

Councillor Sykes MOVED and Councillor Williamson SECONDED the following amendment:

"After 'This Council resolves to' replace the original wording in the resolution with the following

"ask the Chief Executive to write to:

- The Minister of State for Schools calling on the Government to reintroduce the requirement that Fire Sprinkler Systems be installed in new schools as part of Revised Building Bulletin 100
- The Local Government Association asking the association to support the Council's position
- The Borough's three Members of Parliament asking them to make representations on this matter to the Minister'

And add an additional paragraph at the end of the motion:

'This Council also resolves to campaign to ensure that plans for the redevelopment of Saddleworth School and Royton and Crompton School include the provision of Fire Sprinkler Systems into new school buildings.'

The amended motion to read:

"This Council notes:

- The Government has recently changed the guidance to Building Regulations whereby they do not require the

installation of Fire Suppression Systems to be fitted into new schools.

- It was reported there were more than 600 fires in British schools last year and Arson was suspected in 40% of cases. According to insurers, each large fire causes an average of £1.5million of damage, and that, where fitted, sprinklers pay for themselves in lower premiums.
- The core objective of the Revised Building Bulletin 100 is to simplify the guidance. However, in the process, it has removed the expectation that all new schools (except for low risk schools) will be protected from fire with automatic sprinklers. The benefits of Fire Suppression, extensively and emphatically documented in the foreword of the current BB100, by the then Minister of State for Schools, have been erased from the revised BB100, with no mention made of sprinklers at all. This has taken place at a time when new schools in Scotland and Wales will have automatic sprinklers installed.
- There has been no advanced notice, or prior indication of this alarming change, which is, strongly rejected across the Fire Sector, The Fire Sector Federation, the Fire Protection Association and the Arson Prevention Bureau.

This Council believes that

- This is a retrograde step that does not make sense. Sprinklers do not just save lives, they prevent fires from spreading and causing significant disruption to children's education. They are supported by CFOA, teachers and the LGA.
- This change of policy is a false economy as the cost of increased insurance premiums and the damage caused by fire, outweighs that of the installation of sprinklers.
- This is also remarkably out of step with the rest of Great Britain. In Scotland and Wales new schools are fitted with sprinklers. Should children in England be educated in schools with a lower safety standard than those in our neighbouring devolved administrations?"

Councillor Goodwin exercised his right of reply

Councillor Sykes exercised his right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT.

On being put the vote, 9 were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT and 44 votes were cast AGAINST with 0 ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

Councillor Goodwin did not exercise his right of reply.

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

RESOLVED that:

1. The Government be called on to reconsider their position and the reintroduction of the guidance to Building

- Regulations with regard to the installation of Fire Sprinkler Systems into new school buildings.
2. Other Local Authorities be called on to consider requesting that the Government reconsider this matter.

18

NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS

Motion 1

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

“This Council notes:

- Pavement parking can pose a hazard to pedestrians, especially people with sight loss, parents with pushchairs, wheelchair users and other disabled people.
- People with sight loss are especially at risk as they can be forced into the road and faced with oncoming traffic that they cannot see.
- Pavements are not designed to take the weight of vehicles and so surfaces can become damaged or subside, presenting a further hazard for pedestrians, particularly those with disabilities.

Council notes that there are currently offences in law where vehicles are driven over the footpath or where vehicles cause an unreasonable obstruction on the footway; regrettably these offences are frequently left unenforced.”

Councillor Moores spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Steven Bashforth spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Briggs spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor McCann spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Gloster exercised his right of reply.

On being put the vote, the **MOTION** was **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

RESOLVED that the Chief Executive be requested to write to the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester to request:

- Greater Manchester Police enforce the legislation; and
- That Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) be empowered to issue fixed penalty notices to offenders.

Motion 2

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

“This Council is proud to be a member of the Sustainable Food Cities Network and as a member is committed ‘Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system’.

Council notes with concern that this commitment will be more difficult to achieve when:

- Most beverage cups dispensed by coffee outlets cannot be recycled
- The production of bottled water necessitates wasteful processing, bottling and transportation, and when its consumption leads to the discarding of millions of plastic bottles
- Much of the packaging used for food products cannot easily be recycled

Council aspires instead to reduce food packaging and promote recycling across the borough whenever possible.

Council further notes that these aspirations are compatible with the aims of the initiative, the Courthauld Commitment 2025, where signatories pledge to work to reduce 'the resource needed to provide our food and drink by one-fifth over ten years.'

Councillor McCann spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Roberts **MOVED** and Councillor Mushtaq **SECONDED** that under Council Procedure Rule 8.4(d) the motion be referred to Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Councillor Harkness exercised his right of reply.

On being put the vote, the **MOTION** was **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

RESOLVED that under Council Procedure 8.4(d) the motion be referred to Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Motion 3

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

"This Council notes:

- The Government's stated commitment to encourage people with disabilities to return to paid employment
- The important role of railways in getting people to and from their places of work
- That, in contrast to Metrolink, disabled people still face difficulties in accessing some rails services
- The importance of the £102 million Department for Transport 'Access for All' programme in funding adaptations to railway stations to make them more accessible
- That around half of all of the 96 railway stations across Greater Manchester still require more work to make them accessible, including the only railway station in the borough, Greenfield Station

This Council notes with concern:

- Proposals within the recent Hendry Report to defer half of the 'Access for All' projects until the period 2019-24 meaning unacceptable delays in the adaptations to stations
- That any delay to the adaptation of a station means that rail services there will not be accessible to all which is contrary to UK equalities legislation."

RESOLVED that the Motion be rolled over to the Council meeting scheduled on 22nd March 2017.

- 19a 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 Combined Authority	28 th October 2016
Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority	9 th September 2016
National Park Authority	7 th October 2016
Transport for Greater Manchester	16 th September 2016
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service	13 th October 2016

Members raised the following questions:

1. Councillor McCann- National Park Authority, 7th October 2016, Item 40/16: Review of Local Development Scheme. Councillor McCann asked if Councillor McLaren could forward the outline of Peak Park Changes to the Planning Policy and the affect on affordable housing, design and numbers. Councillor McLaren responded that he would forward the information to all councillors.
2. Councillor Harkness – Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Item 188/16: GM Connect Funding. Councillor Harkness asked what it was, what it does and why it cost £1.4m? Councillor Stretton, Leader of the Council, responded that she would provide all councillors with a detailed answer.
3. Councillor Bates – Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority, 13th October 2016, Item 57: Halloween Costumes Campaign Update and Item 58: Cardiac Arrest Response. Councillor Bates asked about the effect of cuts on response times. Councillor Williams responded that GMFRS could get to an incident in 5.37 minutes, which few other authorities could do. The service was able to get 10 appliances within 10 minutes, in Cumbria this could be 25 minutes. Calls in Greater Manchester had been reduced due to assessments being provided by the Fire Service in communities. The service had saved 63 lives in the response to cardiac arrests.

RESOLVED that:

1. The minutes of the Joint Authority meetings as detailed in the



- report be noted.
2. The questions and responses provided be noted.

- 19b To note the Minutes of the following Partnership meetings and the relevant spokespersons to respond to questions from Members

The minutes of the Partnership meetings were submitted as follows:

Unity Partnership Board	12 th September 2016
MioCare	12 th September 2016
Health and Wellbeing Board	20 th September 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnership meetings as detailed in the report be noted.

20 **UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL**

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

RESOLVED that the Update on Actions from Council report be noted.

21 **POLITICAL BALANCE UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal Services related to the review of the political balance of Committees in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which followed the notification to the Chief Executive of a change to political groups within Oldham Borough Council. The Chief Executive had been notified of a change to a political group within Oldham Council. Councillors Rehman and Kirkham had delivered a notice in writing to the Chief Executive signed by both Members and the Leader/Majority of the Group which stated they wished to join the Group.

RESOLVED that:

1. The tables appended to the report which showed the proposed Constitution of Committees affected be applied from 14th December 2016.
2. The changes in the membership in accordance with the allocation of seats as shown in the table to the report be approved.

22 **CIVIC APPRECIATION NOMINATION**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal Services which sought approval of the nomination to receive the Civic Appreciation Award, in recognition of significant voluntary contribution and dedication to local businesses, and to the community of Oldham. The Oldham Deputy Lieutenants Committee had nominated and the Group Leaders have recommended that Mr. Dave Benstead receive the award.

RESOLVED that:

1. The nomination for Mr. Dave Benstead to receive the Civic Appreciation Award 2017 be agreed.
2. The ceremony for the award would take place the Council meeting to be held on 22nd March 2017.

23

EUROPEAN UNION REFERENDUM - IMPACT ON OLDHAM AND GREATER MANCHESTER

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on the impact of the European Union Referendum on Oldham and Greater Manchester. The report provided an outline of the current economic outlook five months on from the vote as well as the wider challenges which included the exploration of voting patterns.

The latest information suggested that the economy continued to grow but was slowing down. There was wide-spread business pessimism but largely stable consumer confidence. The direction of convergence in attitudes between business and their customers would be a key determinant of how the economy performed in the medium-term.

In terms of wider implications and the voting pattern of the borough, it was clear that many people in the borough felt left behind and disenfranchised. This would need to inform policy going forward as a borough and for Greater Manchester particularly in moving Inclusive Growth higher up the agenda both for Oldham and the city region.

RESOLVED that the report on the European Union Referendum and the Impact on Oldham and Greater Manchester be noted.

24

APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2017/18.

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Corporate Governance for the agreement to the appointment of Grant Thornton UK LLP as External Auditor for the financial year 2017/18. The external auditors would:

- Undertake the external audit of the Statement of Accounts.
- Audit the Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim.
- Audit the Teachers' Pension Agency Return.

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 stated that a "relevant authority must appoint a local auditor to audit its

accounts for a financial year not later than 31 December in the preceding financial year". The current external audit contract had been organised by the Audit Commission prior to its close and the option to agree for a further financial year (2017/18) had been agreed by the successor body, Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) following a determination by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The PSAA also acted as an Agent for the Department for Work and Pensions to appoint the external auditor to audit the Housing Benefit Subsidy grant. The Council need to formally appoint Grant Thornton UK LLP to undertake this work for the 2017/18 claim.

The Teacher's Pension Agency also required the certification of an external audit and it was proposed to appoint Grant Thornton UK LLP.

Options/Alternatives:

The only option was for the Authority to agree the appointment of Grant Thornton UK LLP as directed by the Secretary of State. There was discretion to appoint a separate auditor but this was low value work and the recommended option was to appoint Grant Thornton UK LLP.

RESOLVED that the appointment of Grant Thornton UK LLP, as the external auditor for the financial year 2017/18 for the Statement of Financial Accounts, Housing Benefit Subsidy grant claim and the Teachers' Pension Agency return be approved.
Teachers' Pension Agency return be approved.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 9.50 pm