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Councillor Colin McLaren  
Chair of Governance, Strategy and Resources Board  
Oldham Council  
Greaves St  
Oldham  
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20 February 2026

**RE: Access to offline services**

Dear Councillor McLaren,

Now more than ever, there is an expectation that our residents should access council services digitally. Therefore, it is vitally important that we work hard to understand the causes of digital isolation and strive to build services that are accessible to all.

I am writing to request that the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board commission a report for consideration on how the Council is managing access to services for residents who are not online.

Specifically, I would welcome detail on:

- The estimated number of residents without reliable online access
- What alternative (offline) services are currently available
- How we support individuals who present without digital access
- The funding available to underpin this work
- How Oldham Council is ensuring an equal standard of access across all services
- Ensuring robust and sufficient well-trained phone support staff
- Any benchmarking or sharing of best practice with other local authorities

While the input of the digital team is essential to this, this also requires a measure of how well integrated the offline equivalents for access are supported in being part of our strategy, which would require involvement from any teams which are public facing.

As we continue to digitise, it is vital that no resident is excluded. A clear overview would help ensure we are meeting our equality and accessibility obligations.

Kind regards,

**Councillor Alicia Marland**  
**Saddleworth West and Lees**