

Minutes

Credit Crunch War Cabinet

Thursday 26th February 2009

Leaders Office, Rochdale Road Entrance, Civic Centre, Oldham

9:30 – 10:30

Present:	Cllr Howard Sykes (Chair)	Leader
	Charlie Parker	Chief Executive
	Cliff Ellison	Groundwork
	Alison Vaughan	Commissioning Unit
	Ian Flanagan-Smith	Commissioning Unit
	Marie Gillott	Job Centre Plus
	Chris Heaton	Job Centre Plus
	Chris Sykes	GM Police
	Michelle Ford	GM LSC
	Michele Carr	Regeneration, E & E Unit
	Jon Bloor	Regeneration, E & E Unit
	Nick Brown	Oldham Sixth Form College
	Jennifer Wright	Regeneration, E & E Unit
Apologies:	Stephen Lowe	Royal Bank of Scotland

A SECTION OF MINUTES

1 Welcome and Apologies

Cabinet members were welcomed to the inaugural meeting

2 Declarations of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Draft Principles of Operation

- 3.1 The Draft Principles of Operation report was presented, proposing the purpose of the war cabinet is to deal with the emergency of the credit crunch, to identify any issues that come to the war cabinet and to determine if they are a emergency or if they can be pushed back to the relevant Oldham Partnership board. If we do commission there must be discipline and it will be a one off.
- 3.2 A key outcome will be to gather information, data and intelligence from key areas in the economy, from this we will produce a bulletin to communicate to partners facts about the local economy. Through the intelligence brought to this cabinet we will hopefully be able to anticipate potential problems such as community tensions and repossessions. With the help of our banking representative we will also get a feel for the viability of businesses. The group will meet on a monthly basis and will review its progress and impact as to whether or not to continue.
- 3.3 Members agreed that the information shared here is very sensitive and should not be discussed outside of the meeting. The cabinet agreed with the principles outlined.
- 3.4 There were some questions about voluntary sector representation. The group agreed that VCS representation would be via the agreed representative who would be responsible for communication. The group agreed that a wider group of voluntary sector representatives would be well placed to play a key role in the preparation meetings for the cabinet as well, acknowledging that it is important that people are able to access information about volunteering and what they can do in their community.:#
- 3.5 It was noted that volunteering has already been identified as a priority and will be on the agenda of the next cabinet.

4 Economic Dashboard & Intelligence Sharing

- 4.1 The Economic Dashboard and Intelligence Sharing paper was presented. The concept of the Economic Dashboard is to provide a simple overview of key economic performance indicators. The Dashboard is created using predominantly Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) datasets due to the timely nature of reporting (monthly). Other datasets will be added as they are identified. Appendix one shows that there has been a 50% increase within the last 12 months of those claiming JSA. This has been compounded by the number of vacancies offered have been reduced by half.
- 4.2 Discussions included enquiries with regards which sectors were being affected the most.
- 4.3 It was reported that there is not any area showing the most decrease it is just across the board. There are still vacancies in General Admin, Retail, there is just less of them. There is also no change in the type of people that are coming on the market, however there are some redundancies that will still not be registered yet due to them using redundancy money etc. in the first instance.

- 4.4 Discussions took place relating to the changes in LSC, which means relationship with train to gain could change. FE and HE will be affected and we need to see what it will mean for skills transfer.

The Cabinet requested more detailed information by wards to be included as well as NEET data.

- 4.5 **ACTION: JB to include JSA Ward data and speak to Tim Mitchell about NEETs data**

5 Local Economic Impacts Report

- 5.1 The Monthly Intelligence Report was presented with the explanation that alongside the quantitative data already presented, the unit were keen to access more qualitative information to provide context. An initial meeting with colleagues from across the partnership identified seven key areas (The priority areas are covered in appendix 1 of the report).

- 5.2 The group discussed key issues relating to repossessions, which can lead to deeper social impacts which can then make it much harder to get residents back into work. The cabinet requested further information between private tenant and council tenant rent charges, specifically whether they are levelling out in the current climate?

- 5.3 It was reported that there will be a future paper around redundancies and short term working and a model will be brought to the cabinet to identify where the new gaps are forming and then we can give approval here.

- 5.4 It was explained that there is no analysis from businesses at the minute apart from wanting grants and reduced rents.

- 5.5 **ACTION: JB- Repossessions and Housing waiting list to go dash board. More information required from First Choice Homes – including rent charges.**

6 Business Case – Additional Debt Management Support

- 6.1 The Cabinet received a business case which was deemed as required due to an immediate need that had been raised by both the Chair of the E&E board and the advisory panel had been the lack of financial and debt management support for residents either facing short time working or who had been made redundant. The waiting time for a debt appointment has increased from less than 2 weeks back in November to six weeks in February 2009. The business case sought funding for additional posts which would reduce the waiting list by 3 weeks at July 2009 and 2 weeks by October 2009, as there is already a backlog in the system.

It was suggested that the posts could operate within the one stop shop.

The Cabinet approved the business case with the request that the posts will be in place by April.

7 Dates Of Future Meetings

Dates of future meetings were agreed by all members.

8 AOB

Action JB – Communications to be on future agenda and communication through partnerships.

It was suggested that it should be a standing item added onto the end of the agenda in order to recap on key messages.