

Minutes

Credit crunch war cabinet

6 July 2009

Leader's office

10am

Present:	Cllr Howard Sykes (chair) Nick Brown Kath Thomas Michele Carr Jon Bloor Susan Kirkham Cliff Ellison Karen McCrackle	Oldham Council Oldham Sixth Form College The Oldham College Oldham Council Oldham Council Oldham Council Groundwork Oldham Partnership
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Apologies:	Elaine McLean Michelle Ford Viv Robinson	Oldham Council LSC Jobcentre Plus
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- Welcome and apologies**
Apologies as above.
- Minutes of last meeting**
The minutes were approved
- Matters arising**
None
- Declarations of interest**
None
- Economic dashboard and intelligence report**

Oldham saw a reduction in JSA claimants for May, possibly due to the Tesco recruitment. On flow has continued to rise, but off flow also saw a significant rise and the number of people coming off JSA was higher than those coming on. JCP vacancies were up in May.

However, several redundancy announcements, including 100 people made redundant at Mobilis, will affect these figures over the coming month.

All bar a few wards saw a reduction in JSA claimants in May. Lees and Coldhurst saw significant rises.

NEET figures fell for the second successive month and are only 0.2% away from England's average.

Commercial property numbers remained steady.

ACTIONS:

Publicise NEET success in local media

Tim Mitchell to attend next CCWC to talk about NEET interventions

A report on number of vacant commercial properties to come to next CCWC

House values graph v Greater Manchester to be added to next dashboard

6 Unclaimed benefits report

Susan presented estimates of numbers of people in Oldham who are entitled to an income related benefit but don't claim it. In terms of numbers, it was noted that council administered benefits (council tax and housing benefits) have the highest numbers of entitled non-recipients. Comments included -

- The bureaucracy around claiming is so complicated that people are put off claiming for small sums. Personal support is needed.
- Public services could reach their low paid staff and support them
- We have a support model from handling recent council redundancies

7 Benefit take up campaign

Jon outlined a two strand approach to encouraging take up.

- Using the forthcoming roadshows to raise awareness, including a single advice team with staff from CAB, the council, H2O and Unity
- A cross-organisational approach to providing ongoing support once more people come forward. There may be a need to commission extra support at this stage – in particular for those who would find accessing the information on direct.gov more challenging.

Extra staff have been earmarked from the Future Jobs Fund cohort.

Cllr Sykes suggested a pilot to contact approximately 500 properties to see whether the household is entitled to benefits.

ACTIONS:

Maura Brooks to be contacted re the pilot

Investigate the possibility of having a stall at forthcoming large events, eg, Mela

8 Update on CCWC programme

The CAB waiting list is now down to 2-3 weeks. With the introduction of court desks, colleagues will seek CAB's view around their future staffing needs.

It was suggested that we provide a short training session for elected members/the voluntary and community sector, so that they know how to signpost members of the public who ask them for advice.

ACTION:

CAB to be contacted re their staffing needs

Training session for councilors and VCS to be devised

9 Business case – additional CCWC staffing support

The business case for an officer to be recruited to support the CCWC was approved

10 Additional funding for court desk

Funding has been provided by central government to the council for a court desk to provide free, on-the-day legal advice for people facing repossession or eviction hearings.

11 Future dates

These were circulated. The CCWC will review in October whether it needs to meet as regularly as it has been.

28.09.09, 2pm – 3pm

21.10.09, 3pm – 4pm

26.11.09, 10am – 11am

21.12.09, 2pm – 3pm

25.01.10, 2pm – 3pm

22.02.10, 2pm – 3pm

22.3.10, 2pm – 3pm

19.4.10, 2pm – 3pm

All in the Leader's office.

ACTION

All please note the dates

12 AOB

Kath reported that The Oldham College is using Pennine House on Union St. as a business development centre, which will make working with H2O and Jobcentre Plus easier.

Kath also asked that we could raise with MPs the issue of nationally-commissioned organisations wanting to develop their own databases. We already use the Protenus database and the introduction of more will become unworkable.

Susan reported two events to report the results of the partnership's low income, poverty and worklessness research:

28.7.09 – a workshop for stakeholders

14.9.09 – a conference for a wider audience

Invites will be going out soon.

Our Future Jobs Fund bid was submitted, as part of a GM-wide bid, with a proposal of 506 new jobs created in Oldham. Oldham will seek to develop a model based on our successful partnership Tesco recruitment scheme; using this model will mean we match the right people to the right job roles.

ACTION

Cllr Sykes to raise the database issue with our MPs

14 Date and venue of next meeting

28.09.09, 2pm – 3pm

Leader's office.