

Oldham's credit crunch war cabinet

Monthly update
March 2009

1 Credit crunch war cabinet monthly report

Welcome to the first monthly update from Oldham's credit crunch war cabinet. This update will be published after each of the war cabinet's monthly meetings and will give you a clear picture of the current economic situation – positives and negatives - in Oldham. It will help the partnership to examine trends, and anticipate the need for preventative action, and will help partners to identify any adjustments they might need to make to their mainstream services.

2 Introduction to the credit crunch war cabinet

The credit crunch war cabinet (CCWC) was set up in February 2009 to coordinate Oldham's approach to the downturn in a rapid and responsive way. It was proposed at the Oldham Partnership economy and enterprise board in January, and agreed at the partnership's local public service board and through a council motion.

At the same time a rapid intervention fund (RIF) was established from unspent area-based grant funds in 2008 – 09. The RIF will be used carefully and only when there are no other funds available for the proposed activity.

You can read the initial press release about the CCWC at www.oldhampartnership.org.uk/ccwc

The CCWC's role is to:

- Consider how we could better use existing resources to tackle the effects of the credit crunch
- Look at business cases or proposals and decide whether they can be incorporated into what we're already doing across Oldham, or funded by the RIF
- Keep everyone up-to-date with the latest situation. Residents will be kept informed via the local media; partners and elected members via this monthly update, Oldham Partnership meetings and the Oldham Partnership website
- Represent Oldham's interests to central Government

The CCWC will receive a monthly 'dashboard' of data, as well as a round up of issues, for example, concerns emerging from local employers and the number of enquiries dealt with by the Citizens Advice Bureau. There will also be a more detailed quarterly review. This information will be shared in future editions of this update, with the exception of any information judged to be especially sensitive.

The wider membership of Oldham Partnership also has a role to play. Whilst the CCWC will address some of the more urgent and additional impacts of the downturn, all partners will need to consider how they might need to adapt or change their service delivery in response. This update will give partners key information which they can take into account when developing delivery plans and reviewing their services.

The CCWC is chaired by Cllr Howard Sykes. The members of the credit crunch war council are from the following organisations:

- Oldham Council
- Oldham Sixth Form College
- Oldham Partnership
- Greater Manchester Police
- Groundwork
- Jobcentre Plus
- Learning and Skills Council, Greater Manchester
- Royal Bank of Scotland (representing the private sector)

There will be a monthly pre meeting to collect information for the CCWC and identify emerging issues and solutions. You can make suggestions and contributions to this work via:

Economy and enterprise unit, Oldham Council – 0161 770 4670; credit.crunch@oldham.gov.uk
Housing strategy, Oldham Council – 0161 770 2045; housingstrategy@oldham.gov.uk
Communities unit, Oldham Council – 0161 770 3274; community.relations@oldham.gov.uk

Or the Oldham Partnership thematic coordinators:







Safe and strong communities – Colin Cooper; 0161 770 1567 colin.cooper@oldham.gov.uk;
Health and wellbeing – Jacquie Everett; 0161 622 4333 jacquie.everett@nhs.net
Housing – Nick Cumberland; 0161 770 5261 nick.cumberland@oldham.gov.uk
Economy and enterprise – as above
Children and young people – Lihanne Nelson; 0161770 1295; lihanne.nelson@oldham.gov.uk


3 Current data

Over the last 12 months there has been a 50% increase in people claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA). The number of vacancies reducing by half has compounded this. The reduction of vacancies is across all sectors.

December was the third consecutive month where JSA claimants have increased, with an annual increase of 45.1% (Compared to an annual increase of 54.2% across Greater Manchester.)

The 283 vacancies advertised at Jobcentre Plus offices equates to a 53% reduction when compared to the number advertised in December 2007.

Dashboard Indicator	Baseline January 08 (unless stated)	Latest performance data 2008-09		Trend	Rank in Greater Manchester
		Data	Date		
Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) Claimant Count	3,899	5,655	Jan 09		6 out of 10
JSA Claimant Rate (proportion of working age population)	2.9%	4.3%	Jan 09		3 out of 10
Number of people coming off JSA	706	755	Jan 09		5 out of 10
Number of people coming on to JSA	1048	1375	Jan 09		5 out of 10
Jobcentre Plus vacancies	602	283	Jan 09		9 out of 10
Business Rateable Values	£136.4m	£134.7m	Jan 09		8 out of 10

Number of commercial properties	7,124	7,108	Dec 08		Not Applicable
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4 Key outcomes

The waiting time for an appointment at Oldham's Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) has increased from 2 weeks to 6 weeks. The CCWC agreed to fund a business case from the CAB to provide additional staff. This will not only help the organisation to reduce waiting times to two weeks, but will also mean they can provide support to partnership teams going into workplaces where redundancies and/or short time working is taking place.

5 Next meeting

The CCWC will meet again on 6 April, when it will consider volunteering and models of workplace support for redundancy and short-time working.

6 Contact us

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