



## **'Under Development and Into Action' Conference Overview**

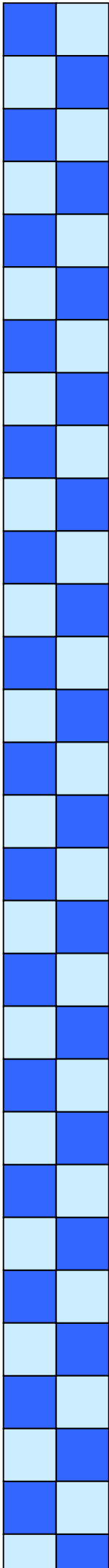
**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2004  
Menzies Avant Hotel, Oldham**

---



## Contents Page

- Introduction ..... 3
- Gail Richards ..... 3
- Sheila Murtagh ..... 4
- Workshops. .... 5
  - Visioning for Oldham ..... 5
  - Managing Our Performance. .... 6
  - Local Area Planning. .... 7
  - Partnership Working. .... 7
  - Community Cohesion ..... 8
  - Marketing ..... 9
  - Sustainable Communities ..... 10
- Feedback from the day..... 10



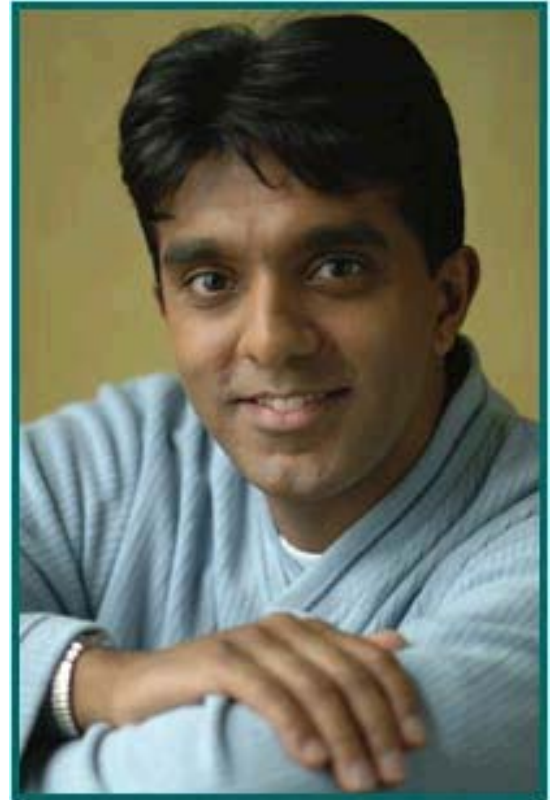
## **Introduction**

On Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> January, the Oldham Local Strategic Partnership Conference at the Avant Hotel brought together the huge range of organisations and individuals within Oldham that support the partnership.

The Oldham LSP is both developing its internal structure and operations and, at the same time, using this to deliver valuable partnership work on the ground. The conference, which was hosted by So Rahman from Granada TV, was an opportunity to explore how through working in partnership we can continue to make a real difference to Oldham life, and at the same time take the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the Oldham LSP to date.

The conference was also a chance to contribute to the future development of the Oldham LSP, and to discuss how to take Oldham into a positive, successful and dynamic future.

This document is an overview of the guidance and discussions at the conference.



---

## **Gail Richards**

The chair of the Oldham LSP, Gail Richards, began the day with a discussion around the complexity of partnership working:

- Different timescales
- Conflicting priorities
- Large number of players
- Complex accountabilities, and expectations
- Lack of evidence of what works

She felt that the steps that the Oldham LSP can take to improve this in the future are:

- Spend time to get to know partners
- Build on existing partnerships
- Hone negotiation skills
- Develop a culture of learning and capacity building
- Truly engage the local community and voluntary sector

In line with the theme of the conference, Gail also took time to share with the delegates the achievements of each of the partnerships of the Oldham LSP.

- **Local Learning Partnership** – secured £325,000 from Neighbourhood Learning Fund to help voluntary and community organisations deliver learning opportunities for residents.
- **Children and Young People’s Partnership** – a newly established partnership, enthusiastic and committed to responding to the needs of children and young people.
- **Health & Social Care Partnership** – produced a strategy to reduce health inequalities across Oldham, and supported development of first schemes for LIFT.
- **Housing Investment Partnership** – contributed to the regeneration of the Borough through delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund projects focused on community cohesion
- **Environment Partnership** – fostered the policy of community-led environmental projects, in allocation of Fair Shares lottery funding and the successful Oldham in Bloom competition.
- **Oldham Against Crime Partnership** – launch of the Community Safety Unit, and work on the Dean Street project has earned the Taking a Stand award. In the past 12 months burglary in dwellings in Fitton Hill has reduced by 16%, and instances of serious crime in Hathershaw was reduced by 67%.
- **Voluntary, Community and Faith Sectors’ Partnership** – launch of Voluntary Action Oldham, which brought strengthened infrastructure and capability to support many projects.
- **Community Cohesion** – Forward Together strategy developed and Finding Common Ground Conference held in June.

Linking into this theme of reviewing activity, Gail used this opportunity to outline the three areas for review within the Oldham LSP’s Performance Management Framework:

- What makes a good Partnership – how are we doing?
- What value are we adding – what have we achieved?
- What next – priorities for improvement and implications for skills and knowledge.

### Sheila Murtagh

Sheila, who is Partnership Manager at Partners IN Salford, gave a presentation on “Partnership Working – Reflections from Salford LSP”. Sheila began her presentation with an overview of the benefits of working in partnership:

- Enables organisations to act strategically and join-up activities across a range of issues
- Local stakeholders can address the issues that matter to local people
- Reduces duplication + bureaucracy through rationalisation of existing partnerships
- Promote equity and inclusion particularly of faith, black and minority ethnic communities

Sheila felt that these were some of the critical factors to the success of the Salford Partnership and other LSPs:

- A clear vision and strategic objectives
- Clarity of purpose
- Dynamic chair encouraging participation and action



- Regular facilitated Partnership review and development sessions enable constructive reflection + improvement
- Willingness to learn from Partners

In the future the Salford partnership is going to:

- Develop a neighbourhood management model with local Partnership boards
- Develop a Performance Management system- common targets, improved/shared information systems and structures
- Website in development
- Major joint initiatives: health focus and employment
- Further roll out of In Salford brand

In conclusion, Sheila outlined some of the things that she has learnt in her time at the Salford partnership:

- Partnership members need (varying) support
- Need to acknowledge that Partners need to learn about each other's agendas and responsibilities
- Transformation requires both high-level commitment and clear implementation structures
- Partnership working needs to be resourced properly
- Partnership broader than seats at LSP table- other groupings should see their contribution
- Trust/understanding takes time to develop- actions and success build confidence

---

### **Workshops**

On the day of the conference seven workshops were held, and attendees were given the opportunity to attend two of these. The workshops provided introductory information on each of the topics, leading to a discussion where feedback from the Oldham LSP was required. Below is an overview of each of the workshops.

#### **1. Visioning for Oldham**

David Rudlin from URBED, held this workshop, which explored the themes that are emerging from the Oldham Beyond study and the way that these can be translated into practical proposals and action on the ground. These themes are:

- Wealth Creation
  - Protecting jobs
  - Inward investment
  - Creative industries
  - Leisure
- Liveability
  - At home in Oldham
  - Social cohesion
  - Housing Market Renewal
  - Repopulation
- A Learning Community
  - Skills
  - Primary
  - Secondary
  - College



- A High Quality Public Realm
  - Common Ground
  - Regeneration Web
  - Town centres
- New Oldham
  - Many places not one
  - Neighbourhoods
  - Civic Society
  - Governance
  - Re-imaging

The outcomes from the workshops will be taken into account by URBED and will be available as part of a total report on consultation activity within the Oldham Beyond project.

## **2. Managing Our Performance**

David Bouchier, Oldham LSP Support Team, and Colin Cooper, Community Safety Unit, held a workshop on Managing Our Performance. This consisted of a presentation on the steps being taken by Oldham LSP to introduce a framework for managing its performance, and a presentation on the practical work being done to manage performance in the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership. This presentation focused on reducing property crime, in particular burglary of dwellings.

The workshop attendees in both sessions then discussed the best ways of taking the LSP performance management work forward in the coming year. The suggestions / advice raised in the two discussions were as follows;

- We should use a common language when talking about performance. Often people have very different interpretations when it comes to phrases such as aim, objective, output, outcome and so on.
- We need clear measurable targets. Otherwise we do not know whether or not we are delivering good performance.
- We may need to refine current practice on performance in partner organisations, but we should beware of creating something completely new that is at odds with existing work.
- The relevant stakeholders need to be involved.
- We should particularly look for those targets that cut across partnerships of the LSP. Achieving those targets would genuinely add partnership value, as those partnerships would be much less likely to have worked effectively together otherwise.
- A more adventurous idea! Could we give each partnership a target from another partnership?
- We should assess our partnership working across the LSP to establish a baseline. We can measure future progress from this.
- We need quantifiable targets that are based on outcomes. By outcomes we mean the difference to the lives of people living / working in Oldham that can be measured (for example rates of crime and educational attainment)
- We should avoid duplication.



These comments will be taken into account when developing and implementing the Oldham LSP's Performance Management Framework.

### **3. Local Area Planning**

Michele Carr led this workshop covering the topic of Local Area Planning. These Plans, which cover the six Area Committees areas, provide specific detail about:

- What makes each area distinctive;
- The strengths and needs of each area;
- What services and activities are provided;
- Some of the future plans for the area.

Discussions centered around how to improve and refine the Plans and, importantly, how to use the area planning process to develop better communication between:-

- The LSP and Area Committees;
- Area Committees and local people; and
- The LSP and local people.

Points raised included:

- There are various methods of communicating the plans, such as panels, networks, and consultations.
- Importance of developing neighbourhood partnerships
- Development of Area Networks important, with Area Committees as one element of them

A discussion about Area Committees raised these points of view:

- They enable consultation maybe only to Councillors, co-opted members and a handful of public.
- Difficult to get young people engaged through Area Committees.
- Are they the best method to communicate with communities?
- Co-opted members don't have votes.
- People who give time don't always get a fair say as those who have been voted in.
- The formality of the meetings and the language used discourages some people from participating.
- Do we expect too much from Area Committees?
- An improvement would be theme-based meetings which were directed by what people want to talk about
- Need to begin to utilise different means of communicating with people, such as text and e-mail.
- What networks that exist already can we tap into? Area managers could map out what networks they have in their Committee area.
- Publicity needs to be improved, such as notices in the newspaper or leaflets door to door

### **4. Partnership Working**

Sheila Murtagh, of Salford IN Partnership, gave an introductory presentation around what constitutes best practice in partnership working, with relevant examples of approaches that have been successful, and those that have not. Sheila identified six areas which would highlight whether a partnership is strong or in need of further development:



- Culture of the Partnership – need a common vision and a ‘can do’ approach
- Relationships within the Partnership – trust and mutual understanding needed
- Vision, objectives, priorities and managing delivery – need a clear vision, objectives and priorities, strategies for action and performance management judged against this
- Structures, processes and connections – need to be strategic, inclusive and action-orientated, including an effective communications strategy
- Support and Identity – an LSP needs adequate administrative, research and management support, and its own distinct identity
- Actions and Delivery – puts in place mechanisms for delivery, evaluates and changes these if necessary, demonstrates added value through outcomes achieved

A discussion enabled the Oldham LSP to be examined in each of these areas, and the following are some of the key points raised:

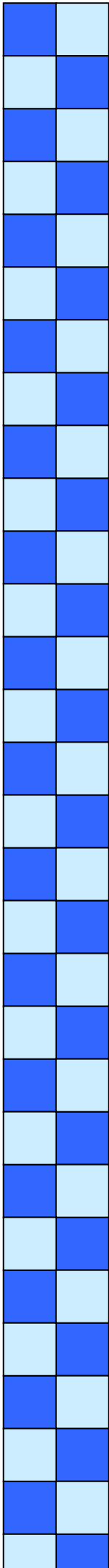
- There needs to be more linkage within the partnership beyond the level of the Steering Group, for example with the Area Committees and housing associations
- There needs to be a more coordinated approach to joint working
- The decision making process and opportunities for participation need to be made more clear and communicated more widely
- All partners need to be aware of their roles and responsibilities as members of the Oldham LSP
- The Oldham LSP needs a clear vision, with specific priorities and targets set for each of the thematic partnerships

### **5. Community Cohesion**

Cllr David Jones held a workshop covering the topic of community cohesion. He began the workshop with a discussion of the extensive number of definitions of community cohesion that have been suggested at the national level, and asked how appropriate these were for Oldham. Using these suggestions, and their own knowledge of the issues and opportunities unique to Oldham, the Community Cohesion workshop aimed to define what Community Cohesion means for the borough.

The discussions raised the following points:

- The voluntary, community and faith sector is the key change agent, though community cohesion is the responsibility of everyone
- Need to enable communities/people to confront their own prejudices and share opinions with other cultures
- School catchment areas are a barrier to more integrated education
- Celebrate success in the area of community cohesion, the positive relationships that already exist
- Community Cohesion is about enhancing respect between people
- Economic regeneration is fundamental to choice and Community Cohesion
- Communicate vision of Community Cohesion to people better, important to use plain, clear understandable language
- Need to deal with the fear of harassment/youth violence
- Need to engage/involve young people in the decisions that affect their lives
- Community Cohesion has to be about choice, not coercion



Using feedback from this workshop, and through extensive consultation, the Community Cohesion vision has been defined as:

'Together, we want to make the Borough of Oldham a place in which people are well educated, with a thriving economy providing people with decent jobs; which has an attractive and healthy environment; where people are safe and live together peacefully; where everyone receives equality of treatment and people treat each other with respect; which welcomes visitors, and where people are proud to say they belong.'

## **6. Marketing**

An introductory presentation was given by Rachel Edwards, Marketing and Communications Officer in the Oldham LSP Support Team, discussing the role and importance of marketing and communications within the Oldham LSP.

Rachel looked at the importance of improving communications within the partnership, as this will be a significant contributing factor towards informed partnership working. Rachel also looked at the opportunity to market the Oldham LSP, its aims and activities to a local, regional and national audience.

To gauge awareness and opinions on the partnership, the groups were asked to identify the Oldham LSP with an animal and give a reason for this, and these are some of the results:

- Spider: Lots of different legs, can cast a web widely, people are scared of them but they are actually doing something positive
- Slug: Slow and unattractive, so people don't try and find out more about it. Needs to be more attractive and vibrant for people to be interested in it
- Octopus: Big head and a big heart, reaching out in many different directions but not very coordinated
- Lion: Strength in partnership
- Fox: Cunning plan on how to make things better

Through this, and more general discussions, the following were the key points raised on the day:

- Whilst the majority of the group had a vague idea of who is involved in the LSP and what its overall aim is, work needs to be done internally, and more externally, to inform people about the specific membership, aims and activities of the partnership
- However, the main priority should be firstly to inform those at a local and regional level about what the Oldham LSP is doing to improve Oldham life, need to focus on the positive outcomes
- Need to make sure that information is accessible to all, including using a suitable font size, variety of languages, different mediums and eliminating the use of jargon.
- There were a variety of views in discussions about developing a new name and identity for the partnership, and marketing activities under this. These will be taken into consideration when developing a marketing and communications plan for the partnership.

These comments will be taken into account when developing the Marketing and Communications Strategy for the Oldham LSP.

## **7. Sustainable Communities**

Bill Edwards of the Environment Partnership led discussions around several aspects of Sustainable Communities. It was decided that by communities, we actually meant physical neighbourhoods and the discussion focused on how Oldham's many neighbourhoods could become sustainable.

### **Positives and Negatives of Large Supermarkets**

Positives:

- Large range of choice, and goods are often cheaper
- Often stock organic/fair trade food
- Provide employment

Negatives:

- Do not provide a local community focus
- Don't sell local produce
- Provide jobs which are low paid and unskilled
- Take up large areas of land in car parks



### **Schools and citizenship**

- It was felt that schools should encourage young people to take pride in their community.
- Schools should be used for the community out of school hours - e.g. for adult learning.
- School buildings should be designed in a sustainable way.
- Through programmes such as Eco Schools young people will hopefully become more environmentally aware as adults and communicate ideas about sustainability to their parents.

### **Neighbourhood Design**

- The street scene should be a public domain that can be used safely, and should be designed to make this possible
- Housing and employment areas to be integrated to reduce the need for transport.
- Alley gating is a mechanism for promoting community ownership and spirit.
- Communities should be encouraged to take ownership of their green space.
- Community groups may be more successful if the street scene became safer.

---

### **Feedback from the Partnership on the Conference**

The majority of attendees returned feedback forms on the day of the conference, with all aspects from administration to the host, the speakers and the workshops, receiving Very Good and Good responses. Some comments included:

- Really positive opportunity to learn more and to network and meet new people. Good friendly atmosphere all day.
  - A great conference
  - The event was very informative and helped explain the needs of the community, and help us meet those needs
  - These conferences help bring people together, and can only improve all aspects of life in Oldham. They should continue to be run.
-