

Minutes

Credit crunch war cabinet

8 May 2009

The Leader's office

2pm

Present:	Cllr Howard Sykes (chair)	Oldham Council
	Elaine McLean	Oldham Council
	Chief Supt Caroline Ball	GMP
	Cliff Ellison	Groundwork
	Michele Carr	Oldham Council
	Jon Bloor	Oldham Council
	Michelle Ford	LSC
	Marie Gillott	Jobcentre Plus
	Steve Lowe	RBS
	Carol Hopkins	GM Chamber
	Karen McCrackle	Oldham Partnership

Apologies:	Name here	Department or organisation here
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1 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were approved. The short time working report will be discussed with MPs so we can lobby regarding short time working leading to the loss of tax credits.

Learning and Skills Council numbers have been reinstated; as has the funding.

2 Declarations of interest

HS, SL and CE declared an interest in item 8

3 Economic dashboard and intelligence report

JB reported some encouraging changes this month. JSA on flow dropped significantly this month so although the claimant count increased, the rate of increase slowed compared to last month. Commercial property figures remained consistent (although we don't know how many are empty)

On the downside, the biggest rate of JSA increase is in wards where unemployment hasn't previously been a particular problem.

ACTION: Claimant count by ward to be presented as a graph or exec summary so we can pick out trends more easily.

4 **Housing in Oldham and the NW**

This report was considered. House prices in Oldham are the lowest in Greater Manchester and are falling across all types of housing however the percentage decrease for detached houses and flats is higher than terraced and semi-detached houses. The gap between Oldham's average house price and the average prices in other GM local authority areas may be growing.

ACTION: This report to be taken to the MPs meeting and leadership

5 **Budget 2009**

A report on the recent budget was considered; we await some detail from Government so don't yet have a full picture of the implications.

MC reported that the Government's plan to create more jobs for young people in community work is likely to be managed at city regional level by the Commission for the New Economy.

6 **Business case – volunteering to employment**

This business case recognises that there has been a shift in the types of jobs available to Oldhamers, so we need to equip them, through work experience, with new skills. This programme would be a stepping stone either back into employment, or if the resident is already working but perhaps short-time hours, or is facing redundancy, into a new kind of employment.

MG said that JCP couldn't buy into this due to their new national contract; however JB said that we could still engage people through our existing client engagement mechanisms.

CE raised concerns that the Access to Work programme isn't available through JCP. MC suggested we raise this in the MPs meeting.

The business case was approved.

ACTION: Access to Work programme not being part of JCP's offering to be raised

7 **Business case – credit crunch roadshow**

A business case to run up to 12 roadshows to help residents through the credit crunch was approved, including an element to train community reporters to convey good news about employment and skills to their fellow residents.

The case was approved. The CCWC recognised that the key challenge was identifying someone to pull the roadshows together.

8 **Verbal update – health of the high street**

The high street in Oldham is still performing reasonably and this is expected to continue. Work is underway to support independent shops, particularly around parking charges that may be causing them to lose business.

CLG will soon be issuing guidance regarding the use of empty retail units. CB asked how and where we decide what to do with void properties

9 **Targeted support fund**

Oldham will receive £190,989 under this fund to provide recession-focused services. Seven of the 10 GM areas will receive it; of these Oldham has the lowest allocation – funds were allocated based on the risk of increased deprivation.

Little was known about the fund at the time of the meeting – Alison Vaughan of the Oldham Partnership's support team was due to meet the Community Development Foundation to find out more.

10 **Date of next meeting**

Please note there is a revised date for the CCWC's next meeting: 11th June at 2pm in the Leader's office