

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMISSIONING GROUP
MONDAY 17th SEPTEMBER 2007**

Attendees:

Bill Edwards (Chair) BE
Jo Charlan JC
Richard Browning RB
Jane Hughes JH
Laura Breslin LB
Jo Farrington JF
Denis Durnian DD
Liz Wilson LW
Cllr Jean Stretton JS
Fazal Rahim FR
Paula Boshell PB
Moir Blood MB
Robin Henshaw RH (Presenting 'Community Infrastructure Development report')

Apologies:

Steve George

Introduction to new members from the VCFP

The group introduced themselves, including two new members, Paula Boshell and Fazal Rahim representing the VCFP. Jonathan Yates from the CAB will replace Jane Hughes at future meetings.

Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

Overview of Oldham 'Infrastructure Development Report - Robin Henshaw, Groundwork Oldham and Rochdale

RH distributed a copy of the report and a summary of the proposals contained in it. Following this, there was a question and answer session for the group with regard to the following points.

J) Larger organisations as community anchors – PB questioned the rationale around listing groups in the document. RH stated that it was a mix of community anchors and community champions and there would need to be a minimum level of funding in order to establish group size.

K) Funding review – Proposal that the Priority Programme Fund (PPF) is pooled in 08 or 09. The group highlighted the risks involved in pooling this funding, stating that some services may be lost as they do not fit with LAA targets. LB questioned whether the future role of the group could be to influence LAA priorities. JS stated that a decision has not been made with regard to PPF and therefore decisions cannot be made at this stage.

R) Voluntary, Community and Faith Partnership – The report states that the proposed co-ordinator should have a central role for the sector and a role within the commissioning centre would need to be considered.

BE questioned whether the report should be published in its current form as there are references to very specific criticisms and perceptions of individual organisations. The group agreed that the report offered a snapshot of individual views and that difficult issues should not be avoided.

Community Infrastructure Development paper – Paula Boshell

PB presented a report in response to the report from RH, stating that she was speaking on behalf of the sector, not Voluntary Action Oldham. She gave an overview to the background of VAO and the success they had gained with the Community Empowerment activities, including the Community Chest fund. Whilst they have had some success, she admitted that they could have done some things differently and that lessons have been learned. She also stated that there is an issue with regards to sustainability of organisations within the Borough as many structures and organisations have disappeared.

PB also highlighted that the suggestion of 'preferred suppliers' alludes to equality. However, transparency would be required as preferred supplier status could exclude small and medium organisations. She also stated that the Government stress the importance of grants to organisations and this should be accounted for when providing funding the VCFS.

PB reported that she supported all recommendations in the Groundwork report in principle but questioned specific details. Specifically, PB questioned the process of selecting larger VCFS organisations to lead commissioning consortiums.

Group discussion and actions for commissioning recommendations

The group agreed that, overall they were in agreement with the proposals but some recommendations are outside the CECG remit. However, it was stated that the report would need to go back to the blocks or partnerships to gain feedback from key players. It was agreed that each member of the group would feed back to their appropriate contacts and forward information to RB as it arises. RB to coordinate and distribute information to all members. JF stated that these comments would relate to further discussions on the allocation of funding for next year. A timetable was requested as a means for the group to move forward with discussions and the request for information regarding the funding allocation for next year.

Action: Group to report back to relevant partnerships with a request for comments

Action: RB to put together a timetable to distribute to the group before the next meeting and so seek information on the allocation of funding for CECG activities.

Any other business

There was no other business to discuss.

Date and time of next meeting

The group will meet again on Monday 15th October at 3pm, Members meeting room, Civic Centre.