

OLDHAM TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

WEDNESDAY 24th JUNE 2009

THE SALT CELLAR, CHURCH LANE, OLDHAM

PRESENT (BOARD MEMBERS):

Mr A Fletcher	Chair
Councillor D Hibbert	OMBC
Councillor J Stanton	OMBC
Mr M Flanagan	(Vice Chair) Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre
Mr M Berry	Debenhams
Ms C Hopkins	Oldham Chamber
Mr S Mitchinson	GMPTE
Ms N Whitehead	Demolition

PRESENT (BOARD ADVISORS AND OFFICERS)

Mr A Buklovskis	OMBC
Mr G Birch	OMBC
Ms C Brown	OMBC
Mrs M Carr	OMBC
Mrs C Chester	OMBC
Mr P Daly	OMBC
Mr M Lester	Town Centre Manager
Mr J Studholme	OMBC Regeneration Directorate
Inspector John Taylor	Greater Manchester Police

1.APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Chief Superintendent Caroline Ball	Greater Manchester Police
Mr J Lake	Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue
Mr G Mitchell	Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre
Ms E Mclean	OMBC
Mr P Roberts	

2. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business submitted.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th April 2009 be approved as a correct record.

4(a) MATTERS ARISING

Car Parking

Michele Carr, Service Director, OMBC, reminded Board Members of the issue that had been raised at the February meeting in relation to On-street Parking Charges and she outlined the outcome of recent discussions that had taken place with local retailers. A paper was submitted which detailed the Current On-street Parking Charges and set out the available options.

Board Members were informed that Councillor Sykes had approached the Credit Crunch War Cabinet requesting them to intervene and put money into Car Parking. A Consultation Meeting had taken place the previous evening and as a result it had been recommended that On-street Car Parking charges should be introduced across the whole of the town. The following recommendation had come out of the meeting:

“5 BANDS – ALL CURRENT ON STREET BAYS

Up to and including 15 minutes	20p
Over 15 minutes and including 30 minutes	40p
Over 30 minutes and including 1 hour	70p
Over 1 hour and up to and including 1 hour 30 minutes	£1.10
Over 1 hour 30 minutes and up to and including 2 hours	£1.50

(Maximum stay 2 hours – No return within 2 hours)”

Board Members views were sought on this recommendation.

The following issues were raised:

- When asked how soon this could be implemented Michele informed the meeting that hopefully this could take place by mid August. Board Members requested that it be implemented sooner but Michele explained that time constraints existed around the advertising of the scheme and the manufacture of the plates.

- Board Members welcomed the principle of reduced charges but hoped that this would not result in people parking for a short while on Yorkshire Street but then shopping in the Town Centre – It was pointed out that the scheme would be the subject of a review in 6 months and then again in 12 months time.
- A request was made that Off-street parking charges be included in any review that maybe undertaken – Board Members were advised that a much wider review as to how people access the Town Centre would be undertaken the findings of which, along with the results of the Formal Review/Monitoring Report in relation to the introduction of On-street parking, would be submitted to a future meeting of the Partnership Board.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no Public Questions received.

6. BLOOM AND GROW

Carol Brown, Service Director, attended the meeting for this item and gave a brief presentation to Board Members outlining the steps that had been taken to improve the Town Centre from the area around the Old Town Hall to Gallery Oldham, down Waterloo Street to Alexandra Park and onto the NDC area. She informed the meeting that these improvements were about improving the Town's infrastructure and not just about the Britain in Bloom Competition. Particular reference was made to the Old Town Hall where window boards featuring art work by local artists had recently been placed. Officers had worked very closely with the private sector on this and Carol thanked all those who had been involved. Mention was made of the Blue Coat School's involvement in planting up flower beds in the Town Centre; this work would continue with maintenance work being carried out over the next three years which would assist the students in acquiring a Diploma qualification. Support had also been provided by the school with the tidying up and planting of a Wild Flower Meadow on St Mary's Way.

It was pointed out that NDC would be hosting part of the tour by the Judges on 31st July 2009.

Board Members welcomed the Project and stated that this indicated the depth of partnership working that existed across the Borough and they thanked everyone involved for all their hard work.

RESOLVED – That the appreciation of the Board be placed on record, acknowledging all the hard work that has been carried out in relation to this Project.

7. UPDATE ON TOWN CENTRE CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN OLDHAM TOWN CENTRE

Mr John Studholme, Regeneration, Economy Place and Skills Directorate, presented a report updating Members on the Town Centre regeneration proposals with specific reference to the following:

- Old Town Hall and Coliseum Theatre

Members of the Partnership were informed that given the current financial circumstances and the financial realities that would have to be overcome in order to relocate the theatre to the Old Town Hall the initial approach had been deemed unrealistic and, as a result in a bid to address this, it had been agreed that two separate working parties be established, one to consider options for the Old Town Hall and one to consider options for the Coliseum Theatre. Suggestions and input from the Partnership would be welcomed.

Board Members welcomed this approach stating that the Coliseum Theatre was vital to Oldham as a Borough but advised that things would have to move very quickly if we wanted to keep the theatre in the town. An Elected Member stated that his preferred option had always been to link the Theatre with the Oldham 6th Form College courses and situate it somewhere in that area.

- Town Centre Masterplanning

The Partnership was informed of a recent workshop on Town Centre Masterplanning, that had taken place in April this year and was advised that after further analysis of the workshop outcomes the results would be used to inform further work on a review of the Town Centre regeneration.

- Sustainable Transport Study

Board Members were reminded that it had been the intention to appoint consultants and start survey work before the summer holidays but, following the announcement that Metrolink 3b was to go ahead it had been decided to delay the tendering until such time as full details of the 3b proposals were known.

- Greater Manchester Town Centres Study

Members of the Partnership were informed that final conclusions of the Study, which would include individual town centre assessments and recommendations, were awaited from the consultants. Elaine McLean, Executive Director Economy, Place and Skills had attended a meeting where the suggestions from the Consultants had been somewhat surprising; Key priorities for the Borough had been the regeneration of Mumps capitalising on Metrolink but the suggestions from

the consultants had been that Oldham would lead on “Low Level Carbon Living”. Board Members expressed their surprise at the outcome and asked what the next step would be in the process – Officers informed the meeting that the official

outcome was still awaited and that the Partnership would have the opportunity to comment on this once it became available.

Town Centre Regeneration Activity

Information relating to regeneration activity in the Town centre was submitted for Board Members’ information and the following issues were highlighted:

- Oldham and Rochdale Economic Skills Alliance (ORESAs) – West End and Mumps – It was reported that pending development Oldham Council had sub-let the Co-op building on a short-term basis for a period of three years. Valuetask had received planning permission to create an Indian restaurant in the building which was expected to open in July 2009.
- Alexandra Retail Park – The owners Zurich Assurance had received planning permission in November 2008 for the development of this site which would create 10 retail units, a leisure and commercial use in the Park Road Railway warehouse, a 600 space car park and a new access to Oldham Way. Board members expressed concerns that this could have a detrimental effect on developments in the Town Centre.

RESOLVED – That the report and comments made be noted.

8. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Mark Lester, Town Centre Manager, submitted a report which sought approval for an amendment of the Town Centre Partnership’s Constitution in order to admit the Oldham Coliseum, as a major Town Centre Business, as a board member.

RESOLVED – That it be recommended to Council that the Constitution of the Oldham Town Centre Partnership be amended to include a representative of the Oldham Coliseum Theatre on the Partnership Board.

9 (a). UPDATE ON SECTION 106 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS IN THE TOWN CENTRE

Mr Arnis Buklovskis, Principal Planning Officer, Economy, Place and Skills Directorate provided Members of the Board with an update on all new planning obligations insofar as they related to the Town Centre. The report provided details of schemes that had been developed using resources that had been secured through existing planning obligations in the town centre. It was pointed out that since the last update no further Section 106 agreements had been completed.

A Board Member asked if there had been any progress with his request submitted to the last meeting for the Board to be given the opportunity to assist with the prioritising of schemes on which this money could be spent. The officer advised that it was envisaged that reports should be produced for future meetings.

With reference to the contribution towards the cost of Public Open Space in the vicinity of the Victory Cinema site, Officers advised that this was being addressed by the Officer Town Centre Working Group and it could be that some options would be available at the next meeting of the Partnership.

RESOLVED – That the report and comments made be noted.

9 (b). PLANNING APPLICATIONS DETERMINED IN THE TOWN CENTRE BETWEEN 1ST APRIL 2008 AND 31ST MARCH 2009

Mr Arnis Buklovskis, Principal Planning Officer, Economy, Place and Skills Directorate provided Members of the Board with a brief overview of all planning applications that had been determined in the Town Centre between 1st April 2009 and 8th June 2009. A detailed breakdown of all applications was submitted for Board members' information. The Partnership was advised that a Working group had been set up by the Chair of Planning, Councillor Hindle, to look at the number of take-aways that existed in the Town Centre, with particular reference to Union Street. Board Members welcomed this and it was pointed out that any changes to policy recommended by this group would be put before the Council's leadership for consideration

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE – OLDHAM TOWN CENTRE POLICING OVERVIEW APRIL 2009

Inspector John Taylor, Greater Manchester Police, referred to the fact that, as had been reported at the last meeting of the Partnership, the Police were in the process of reviewing the format of their reports and a draft report format was submitted; Board Members views on this new format were requested.

Inspector Taylor also presented a brief report which informed the Board that the town centre team had been working hard to deliver the set standards of service to the local communities by being visible, listening to and acting on community concerns. He highlighted the following issues:

- Operation Linstead – a vehicle crime initiative that had been running for two weeks;
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- Supporting the Local Authority Licensing Department in the ongoing 22 licensing reviews;
- Officers were working closely with Positive Steps, Connexions to re launch the “Just If” proof of age scheme;
- A full time ASBO officer had now been recruited within the CSU;
- Surgeries had been delivered at the Tommyfield Market, the Civic Centre, Library and Sainsburys.

In presenting the Crime and Incident Statistics Inspector Taylor highlighted the following:

- MSV (More serious violence) – Violence was a huge issue particularly around the night time economy. A Co-ordinator had been employed who worked closely with Licensing Officers taking action where necessary.
- Robbery – this was closely linked/aligned with theft from person and was slightly up on last year’s figures. Inspector Taylor encouraged people to be vigilant about their own property.

Board Members commented as follows:

- Members were happy with the draft report format and asked the Police to include the type of information, which in their opinion would serve the Partnership best. However it was the opinion of some Board Members that the information relating to the BID should be kept separate.
- The anecdotal information was considered to be very useful.
- Board Members asked for last year’s figures to be included in the Crime Statistics for comparison purposes.

RESOLVED – (i) That the content of the report and comments made be noted.
(ii) That the new format for the Police report as detailed above be agreed.

11. BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

Mark Lester, Town Centre Manager, submitted a report which provided the Partnership with an update on the business planning process.

It had been reported at the previous meeting that work had commenced on the production of the new longer term plan which was being developed in line with new delivery mechanisms as part of the Council restructure. The creation of the Economy, Place and Skills Directorate had brought together a number of key functions that would impact on the town centre and which would present the opportunity for a more co-ordinated approach.

Michele Carr, Service Director, advised that it was very much a first draft of a framework. Key issues of the Business Plan had been grouped together in a way that

would reflect how the Plan had developed. Elaine McLean, Executive Director for Economy Place and Skills had made a firm commitment to providing strong managerial control over the process and it was suggested that an invitation be extended to Elaine to attend the next Partnership Board meeting.

A number of emerging themes had been identified which were detailed in the report and Board members commented on the following:

- Restructuring of markets – this was currently being looked into and it could be that a report would be available for a future meeting of the Partnership.
- The meeting that had taken place the previous evening about On street car parking had been a good example of engaging with the business community.
- An Elected Member asked if Chadderton Market could be included in the re-structure of markets – Michele Carr agreed to take this on board.
- The Chair asked if the Public Realm could be included – Michele Carr agreed to include this.

RESOLVED – That the update and comments made on the report be noted and where applicable be acted upon.

12. REPORTS OF THE TOWN CENTRE MANAGER AND SUB GROUPS

Mr Lester, Town Centre Manager, presented the following reports, for information:

(a) Report of the Town Centre Manager – Members were updated on the range of duties that the Town Centre Management Team had undertaken since the last meeting of the Partnership and the current situation and progress set against the projects contained under each Aim of the Partnership's Business Plan.

Particular mention was made of the fact that work had progressed to further develop the role and effectiveness of the Area Action Team with the membership having been reviewed and a new Action Plan having been produced. It was envisaged that progress reports from the Action Team would be incorporated into the new Police format as agreed at Item 10 on the agenda.

(b) Finance Report – Members were provided with an update in relation to the four main budgets currently held by the Partnership. Mark Lester advised that work was at present being undertaken in a bid to secure funding for Partnership activity from a range of sources. A bid had been submitted to the Oldham Partnership for support for the Christmas Campaign, a sum of £100,000 had been granted and Officers were still seeking additional funding. It was noted that the Shopping Centre had re-confirmed their commitment

(c) Progress Report on the Business Improvement District (BID) – A report was presented which provided an update on the delivery of the Business Improvement District (BID) within the Town Centre. It was reported that a total of £108,728 had been collected in the 2008/2009 financial year, which represented a collection rate of 71%. The BID Business Plan included a 10% contingency for non-collection. The actual

collection rate obviously fell outside of this contingency which was thought to be in part due to a number of premises becoming vacant in the BID area due to the demise of a number of national retailers.

Work was underway to establish the reasons for non-payment and to establish the likelihood of recovering the outstanding payments.

A total of £99,465 had been collected to date for the 2009/10 financial year which represented a current collection rate of 63%.

A brief update was also submitted on the individual projects which highlighted the following:

- Business Crime Partnership – Information submitted by local businesses was having a valuable impact in helping to drive forward the Partnership's various intelligence-led initiatives. To date 23 offenders had received Orders banning them from all businesses who had signed up to the scheme with a further 11 currently being processed. There had been some great results and some fantastic press coverage on the scheme.
- Deep Cleansing – Board Members were advised that the date of the summer clean had now been put back a week.

(d) Marketing and Promotions – It was reported that the Marketing and Promotions Sub Group continued to meet on a regular basis and details of forthcoming activities were submitted. Particular mention was made of the Festival Oldham which had taken place on the weekend of 23rd/24th May 2009.

Board Members were advised that Christmas preparations were well under way.

(e) Events – Members were presented with a list of forthcoming events that were scheduled to take place in the Town Centre from May to December 2009 and Mark Lester advised that a more finalised version of the Christmas Programme should be available for the next meeting of the Partnership Board.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13. METROLINK

Graham Birch, Regeneration, attended the meeting for this item and informed Board Members that at this moment in time there was not a great deal to be added to the report that had appeared in the Oldham Chronicle on 17th June. He advised that what was certain was that on the 3a routes Werneth to Mumps work was well underway, with closure of the rail route taking place in October and the arrival of the Metrolink replacement service by the end of 2011. The extension to Shaw and Rochdale would take place by Summer 2012. and the station at Mumps would be replaced and moved to Brook Street/ Bell Street, planning approval for which would be sought fairly soon. With regard to the 3b route there was now a commitment, which was part of a package of schemes which would be built as a result of funding that had been made available through AGMA.

Board Members welcomed the news and raised the following issues:

- Deliverability of the project. And the drawbacks of implementing 3a and 3b sequentially rather than moving straight to 3b
- The need for a clear timetable for the early implementation of 3b
- The need to plan to alleviate the inevitable disruption during construction
- In this planning, Officers should take the opportunity to look at other issues in the Town Centre such as the improvement of the quality of frontage of buildings on Union Street and improved access to Alexandra Retail Park – Officers and Elected Members need to be brave and imaginative.
- Concerns were expressed that once 3b was completed 3a might remain open. Assurance would be needed that there would be a strong level of service on 3b should this happen.

In closing Graham Birch advised that this whole programme would be part of a Regeneration Project which would have a huge impact on the Public Realm. The Chair thanked Graham Birch for his informative presentation.

RESOLVED – That the content of the presentation be noted and the concerns of Board Members be acknowledged.

14. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Paul Daly, Planning Officer, Economy, Place and Skills submitted a report which provided Board Members with an update on the Local Development Framework (LDF). He advised that the LDF was the new style land-use/development Plan that would replace the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), it was a statutory document that would be the “spatial expression” of the Sustainable Community Strategy. He pointed out that ultimately there would be public examination of the framework. In comparison with previous plans this plan was not just about planning but also about delivering. Paul gave a brief outline of what had been undertaken so far and also outlined the next steps in the process.

Board Members found the update very useful and asked if there was a part of the process which would enable the Oldham Town Centre Partnership to act as consultants. Paul advised that no opportunity existed at the present time but this would be available when refining of the options took place next year.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – That the next meeting of the Partnership be held on Wednesday 2nd September 2009 commencing at 8.30am at a venue to be advised.

The meeting commenced at 8.30am and closed at 10.50am