

Minutes

Oldham Partnership Steering Group

Thursday 9th July 2009

Saddleworth Suite, Civic Centre, Oldham

6pm

Present:

Jon Bloor	Economic Partnership
John Crompton	Area Committee Representative for Failsworth Ward
Pauline Richardson	Area Committee Representative for Chadderton Ward
Lihanne Nelson	Children's Trust
Jonathan Yates	Voluntary and Community Sector
Cllr Eileen Hulme	Oldham Council
John Eley	Oldham Partnership
Ian Flanagan Smith	Oldham Partnership
Neil Consterdine	Oldham Council
James Allen	Area Committee Representative for Coldhurst Ward
Roger Gould	Churches Together in Oldham
Stuart Goodwin	Greater Manchester Police
Cllr Paul Martin	Oldham Council
Carolyn Wilkins	Oldham Council

Apologies:

Bill Edwards	Chair
Jean Maxwell	Area Committee Representative for Royton and Shaw Ward
Kevin Dawson	Area Committee Representative for East Oldham Ward
Charles Shaw	OCVYS (Oldham Council for Voluntary Youth Service)
Moira Percy	GMPTE
Cllr Olwen Chadderton	Oldham Council
Cllr Alan Roughley	Oldham Council
Marie Gillott	Jobcentre Plus
Zuber Ahmed	Vice Chair
Raad Al-Hamdani	Area Committee representative for Saddleworth and Lees

A SECTION OF MINUTES

1 Welcome and Apologies

John Eley announced that he had been requested to chair the meeting and passed on apologies from Bill Edwards, Zuber Ahmed and other members of the group (listed above).

It was announced that a number of meetings had coincided on 9 July and that every effort would therefore be made in the future to coordinate meeting dates more effectively.

ACTION: None

2 Minutes and Matters Arising

Re 21/09 James Allen said he had not received a reply from Tom Wolstencroft. John Eley agreed to follow up on this with Tom.

Re 21/09 – it was noted that an update on the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) would be reported at the next meeting.

Re 22/09 – this action was picked up by the agenda (Item 6 – Economic Dashboard).

Re 23/09 – further information was requested on performance in relation to affordable housing and young smokers in Oldham. It was confirmed that a performance update would be reported at the next meeting and can include a focus on affordable housing and smoking.

Re 24/09 – it was reported that the Oldham Partnership Strategic Research Working Group (OPSRWG) is continuing to implement its Delivery Plan and will report back on progress at a future meeting.

Re 25/09 (A proposal for well-being indicators) – it was agreed that there will be a report back on progress at the next meeting. It was emphasised that ageing population dynamics need to be given significant consideration by the group developing a well-being measure for Oldham.

26/09 – a Joint Oldham Partnership / Overview & Scrutiny event to develop 2020 milestones for Oldham took place at Chadderton Town Hall on 23 June 2008 and that there would be a report back on this event at the next meeting. It was highlighted that the Audit Commission had recommended that Oldham develops a set of longer-term milestones and this was the backdrop to this work.

ACTION:

- **John Eley to seek a response from Tom Wolstencroft to James Allen's letter**
- **Ian Flanagan Smith to report performance on affordable housing/young smokers at the next meeting and to present a report on the 2020 target setting workshop held on 23 June 2008**

3 Climate Change Briefing for the LSP

John Eley presented a paper saying that Government Office North West (GONW) is providing a high-level briefing on climate change for the Oldham Partnership on 16 July 2009, in the Education Suite, Gallery Oldham, at 5pm. The purpose is to generate more support and activity to tackle performance around climate change.

Steering Group were asked to disseminate this information across District Partnerships and throughout the voluntary sector (Jonathan Yates).

ACTION:

- **John Eley agreed to re-circulate the invitation to the climate change briefing on 16 July 2009 as some members of the group had not received this**
- **District Partnership representatives to circulate the invitation on the climate change briefing on 16 July 2009 across their District Partnerships and Jonathan Yates was asked to distribute the information to voluntary sector partners**

John Eley introduced Carolyn Wilkins. Carolyn presented a report explaining that there will now be six District Partnerships, which bring together a range of agencies, Ward Councilors and other stakeholders, and utilise a range of ward engagement mechanisms (e.g. Ward PACTs). The District Partnerships are intended to be strategic meetings looking at a range of performance indicators to set priorities to inform District Partnership Plans. A key challenge from an engagement point of view will be how the District Partnerships respond to feedback. The District Partnerships will play a key part in looking at how we deliver services differently and let people know what services/programmes are taking place in an area (it was highlighted that the Passport to Summer as a good example of awareness raising). The District Partnerships are also about how different agencies coordinate resources going into local areas. Local members continue to have a £3k budget and Wards still have a £6k allocation. East Oldham and Chadderton have been allocated a £100k budget in 2009/10 to pilot different ways of working. The pilots will be evaluated next year.

The following comments and questions were raised by members of the Steering Group:

- Members thought the District Partnerships were like a return to an earlier system and did not think six Area Co-optees in total is sufficient. An Area Co-optee for each Ward was recommended.
- Members felt that the structure of the District Partnerships and the role of Area Co-optees is not clear – from a Area Co-optee perspective it feels like they have been inherited by the new system – at the first meeting in Chadderton there was concern about whether the £100k budget could realistically be spent in this financial year (several members of the group agreed that this was a concern)
- Jonathan Yates saw the District Partnerships as a positive development and encouraged active involvement of the third sector in the Partnerships. Jonathan supported the notion of community access points and said he would like the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to be involved with this.

Carolyn said she is Officer Champion for East Oldham, has met with co-opted members from East Oldham, and accepts that the experience of co-optees is highly valuable. It was agreed that more engagement with co-optees would have been useful, but also that this process is about understanding 'what people want it to be' as well as 'what it is'. It was accepted that the structures may feel confusing initially but it is also important that discussions about structures do not take us away from the business of delivering (Neighbourhood Managers and Area Action Team are in place to make sure work continues).

Members of the group welcomed the opportunity for Area Co-optees to shape the discussion about their role and said that the co-optee training session model had worked particularly well in the past. It was also highlighted that the Area Co-optees have lacked administrative support in the past (e.g. with writing minutes) – it was confirmed that this should be the Neighbourhood Managers' role.

Carolyn accepted that they need to keep the process of engagement going, and her understanding is that underspends will not necessarily be lost (as it is important we do not rush decisions about spending) but will confirm whether this is the case and feed back.

It was explained that the membership of the District Partnerships will be expanded and there will be opportunity for an enhanced role for the third sector.

Carolyn and John Eley agreed to speak to the steering group leading on area working and raise the concerns about budgets and the role of Area Co-optees.

ACTION:

- **Carolyn Wilkins will feed back to Area Co-optees on budget mechanisms**
- **Carolyn Wilkins/John Eley will speak to the steering group leading on area working and raise the concerns the steering group leading on area working and raise the concerns about budgets and the role of Area Co-optees**

5 Youth Provision

Neil Consterdine presented a report on Integrated Youth provision. The background is that it is a national requirement to look how activities for young people can be integrated. Neil is now Head of Integrated Youth Services – this incorporates Head of Youth Service, Head of Sport Development and Head of Extended Learning.

The first task has been to bring together youth service and sport development and to achieve a £560k saving across integrated youth. The saving has been achieved through reducing the number of management posts across two services and some closures of youth centers. It was reported that contrary to some perceptions, not all youth centers have been closed – an analysis was carried out which found that some youth centers were not fit for purpose and had limited take-up (e.g. Delph on average had only six people attending each session and was therefore closed, North Chadderton and Lees centers have also been affected).

Staffing of centers has not been affected, but some staff have been moved into other areas to meet demand. The administrative function has been reduced however enabling more concentration on front-line provision. Staff contracts have been changed to enable more delivery at evenings and weekends (and an increase of face-to-face provision from 60 to 80%) and an ability to respond to events as they happen.

One member asked whether thought had been given to further integration with the voluntary sector. It was confirmed that this has been looked into and there will be further work taking place around this.

There is still Borough-wide provision e.g. empowerment team helping young people influence decision-making.

Passport to Summer is in part an outcome of more integrated provision. This is the first time information about services have been brought together in one place, and in future there may be demand to integrate information in this way for a range of specific age groups.

James Allen said he had sent a letter to youth services about Robin Hill youth centre, as young people in Coldhurst were concerned about changes to staffing, and James had suggested that youth services come to visit the Robin Hill youth center to discuss the issues. To date, James had not received a response to his letter. Neil said he had not seen the letter and would speak to James outside the meeting, and commented that staffing has been matched to what is needed across the Borough.

Stuart Goodwin said the difference made by integrated youth has been phenomenal; youth services have now been coming to the police in response to issues rather than the other way around, and services are going where they are most needed.

A question was raised around how much engagement there had been with Oldham Community Leisure (OCL). It was explained that Integrated Youth are in contact with OCL and Sport Development Workers offer sports provision in OCL facilities. Integrated Youth are also using other sports centers (on a trial basis) because OCL facilities are not always open at required hours.

It was further asked whether evidence will be collected about the improvements that are happening, and whether there will be further consultation with young people to respond to their needs. The youth parliament/council, made up of young people from youth clubs in different districts, was cited as an example. This influences the work of Integrated Youth. It was also suggested that the high take-up of youth services on a Saturday night indicates that young people want the service (but this doesn't mean the service doesn't need to be offered to more young people). It was confirmed that there will be monitoring of performance indicators developed over time, the aim being to show that take-up has lowered crime/anti-social behaviour (but it was added that not all young people are a concern, so we may not see a reduction in anti-social behaviour).

Attention was drawn to trouble in the Westwood area. The group agreed that the move to a more rapid response model will help us respond to issues. It was also argued that there is evidence of excellent outcomes in Westwood, and we need to be clear that we cannot prioritise everything.

It was asked whether front-line staff working will be working on evenings and weekends and it was confirmed that staff will be working these hours (at least four nights a week).

A question was raised as to whether there will be a 'Passport' document for all seasonal holidays. The Our Oldham website will be kept up-to-date with information. No decision has been taken yet on what sort of publication there will be after September 2009.

The group agreed with a comment that the Passport to Summer has made extraordinary strides forward (but there was a suggestion that website links need to be printed in a larger font in future).

The group were informed that there will also be information published on a 'credit card' style publication, and Facebook / Twitter websites are also being used (a first for Oldham Partnership and Oldham Council)

ACTION:

- **Neil Consterdine to speak to James Allen outside the meeting to discuss his letter about Robin Hill youth center**
- **Area Co-optees were asked to circulate the Passport to Summer and Festival of Diversity information through their District Partnerships**
- **Ian Flanagan Smith to present a performance report at the next meeting that includes a focus on performance outcomes in relation to young people, to see whether it is possible to observe the impact of Integrated Youth activities at this stage**

6 Economic Dashboard

Ian Flanagan Smith presented data from the Economic Dashboard (the report that goes to the Credit Crunch War Cabinet monthly) and other data.

The presentation showed that Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) Claimant Count and Rate had reduced between April and May 2009 and Oldham had moved from having the 3rd highest JSA Claimant Rate in Greater Manchester to the 4th highest JSA Claimant Rate.

A question was raised as to why there has been this improvement in Oldham within the context of Greater Manchester. It was explained that although there are still more people going onto JSA, larger number of people are coming off JSA quickly (and several hundred more job vacancies are expected in Oldham soon). There have also been a series of road shows in Oldham about opportunities and a joint Oldham/Rochdale event supporting businesses. It was said that Oldham is doing its best to respond to a difficult global issue and the Oldham Works supplement highlighted a number of good news stories. As a locality Oldham has directed resources to where they are most needed (e.g. Credit Crunch War Cabinet). The CAB has been able to respond to increasing requests for debt advice through financial support from the Credit Crunch War Cabinet, and waiting times are starting to come down – three weeks for general services, two weeks for housing services (the CAB has also received support from national Citizens Advice and Oldham Housing Improvement Partnership (OHIP)). If any members of the Steering Group know anybody who needs advice it was said that the Oldham Partnership can help to point them in the right direction.

It was suggested that there should be even more dissemination of good news stories, and better information to be able to signpost people to correct services (e.g. CAB). It was reported that there is now a lot of additional work taking place to raise awareness of success stories, that we need to make sure we use the right methods for each audience, and we need to think about how we use a range of front-line services to direct people to debt advice (one member gave the example that First Choice Homes Oldham is doing this effectively).

ACTION:

- **Ian Flanagan Smith agreed to circulate his presentation by e-mail**



Oldham
Partnership

7 Area Based Grant 09/10

John Eley started by saying that this item was a response to a request at the last meeting for more information on Partnership finances.

It was explained that Area Based Grant (ABG) is a three-year allocation from Government. Before ABG separate funding streams came into Oldham at different times of the year and it was very difficult to programme manage activities. ABG enables the Partnership to commission and programme manage more effectively and to work with District Partnerships.

Examples were given of where ABG underspends have been redirected to activities that have been needed most e.g. CCWC debt advice and helping people into work. A report was presented providing an overview of 09/10 and 10/11 budget allocations. It was explained that underspends from each year can be redirected to other priority areas.

There is an expectation that post-2010/11 the amount of external resource coming into the area will reduce and that we need to start planning for this.

Jonathan Yates asked whether it will be possible to plan the Priority Programme Fund on a three-year basis in the future. It was agreed that this is a difficult question but that we do need to plan for sustainability, looking for alternative resources wherever possible - three-year commissioning can therefore happen but this might not be possible in all circumstances.

Jon Bloor noted that the Economy & Enterprise (E&E) Board is expecting a reduction in its ABG allocation in 2010 – he understood that this was due to a move away from silo funding streams, but said that the E&E Board feels disconnected from the funding allocation process. John Eley explained that from 2010/11 there is likely to be a move to a single commissioning body as funding is becoming increasingly crosscutting, particularly when we start the commissioning process by looking at people's needs. John Eley said that as a partnership we need to break down barriers around funding pots, but that it might be overly ambitious to move to a single commissioning body any earlier than 2010/11.

It was also explained that even under a single commissioning framework there would still be three strategic themes and added that a further challenge hindering longer-term planning is that we don't know what next Comprehensive Spending Review will look like, but we expect to know more over next six months.

It was suggested that, if we are expecting considerable reductions in grants, we should begin looking at models of localities that have not received the grants Oldham has been receiving, and learn lessons from how they have responded to having fewer resources. It was agreed that this approach would be helpful.

It asked whether Partnership Support covers all partnerships. It was confirmed that this budget heading covers Housing Market Renewal and other operational budgets.

John Eley can be contacted directly about any other more detailed questions.

The group felt that the paper was helpful and facilitated more transparency around finances.

ACTION:

- **John Eley agreed to highlight to other colleagues that it is difficult for the voluntary sector and other partners to plan effectively without three-year budgets**

8 Future meeting dates for 2008

The next meeting will be held on 10 Sept 2009

ACTION:

9 Agenda items for future meetings at this stage

- 2009/10 performance update (10 Sept 09)
- Proposal for well-being indicator (10 Sept 09)
- Update on area working arrangements (10 Sept 09)