

Minutes

Oldham Executive Partnership Group

Thursday 18th December 2008
Groundwork, Shaw Road, Oldham
 2:00pm

Members Present:	Nick Brown	Chair & Further/Higher Education Sector
	Paula Boshell	Voluntary, Community & Faith Partnership
	Marie Gillott	Job Centre Plus
	Geof Harris	Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue
	Carol Hopkins	Private sector
	David McGealy	Voluntary, Community & Faith Partnership
	Gail Richards	Oldham Primary Care Trust
	Cllr Thompson	Oldham MBC
Observers Present:	Michele Carr	Oldham MBC – Regeneration
	Ami Dennison	Minute-taker
	John Eley	Oldham Partnership Support Team
	Ian Flanagan Smith	Oldham Partnership Support Team
	Tim Mitchell	Positive Steps
	Bruce Penhale	Oldham MBC – Communities
	Jennet Peters	Government Office North West
	Charles Shaw	Oldham Council for Voluntary Youth Service
	Phil Sumner	Community Cohesion Advisory Group
	Alison Vaughan	Oldham Partnership Support Team
Members Apologies:	Caroline Ball	Greater Manchester Police
	Cllr P Dean	Oldham MBC
	Michelle Ford	Learning & Skills Council
	Cllr J McMahon	Oldham MBC
	Charlie Parker	Oldham MBC
	Cllr H Sykes	Oldham MBC

46/08 **Welcome and Apologies**
 No Declarations of interest were received.

47/08 **Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive Group (18th September 2008) and Matters Arising**

Phil Sumner referred to minute 21/08 on the Commission of an Inquiry into the use of alcohol in Oldham and raised concerns about holding an inquiry, stating that action needed to be taken based on collective ideas and knowledge, which should be pooled. This needed to be prioritised and action points reviewed in the summer, rather than commissioning an inquiry.

Phil Sumner also referred to minute 10/08 regarding the Multi Area Agreement where it was agreed that the item be brought to the next meeting for further discussion but had not been included on the agenda and he raised concerns about how community cohesion was being prioritised. Michele Carr informed the meeting that during the MAA review, Cllr Sykes would raise the issue in the course of the commission process and she would oversee this at officer level. Ms Carr also advised that community cohesion was within the remit of the AGMA and that the draft revised MAA would be brought to the Executive prior to finalisation.

John Eley commented on minute 30/08 and stated that the fourth indicator regarding contract values was being evaluated for 2008/09 and would be fed back to GONW.

David McGealy noted that minute 31/08 did not reflect all the comments made but as the TIF referendum had taken place this was not an issue.

Regarding minute 32/08, John Eley stated that a meeting had been set up between Bruce Penhale and Phil Sumner to ensure that community cohesion was appropriately incorporated into the Local Area Agreement.

A discussion regarding minute 37/08 took place. Paula Boshell expressed a high level of concern over the proposed alterations to priority programme funding and the way the proposals had been consulted upon. She stated that these concerns had been highlighted at the last meeting of the Executive but that despite being promised a meeting with Bruce Penhale nothing had been done to address the issues she had raised. Paula explained that she felt this was an urgent matter because the cabinet had already made a decision in principle and the matter would be put before full council on 15th February. Paula wanted the consultation period to be extended as she felt that the council were not consulting widely or appropriately enough. She also highlighted that the voluntary organisations were not being kept informed and were therefore unable to respond to the consultation appropriately. They were also not being given full information about the new strands that were being introduced and therefore whether the new funding arrangements would affect them, adding that this left little time for the voluntary organisations to seek alternative funding or give employees notice, etc, putting them in danger of breaching employment laws.

Councillor Thompson commented that cabinet had given commitment to finding

alternative funding for those organizations that fall outside of that funding stream and that she thought the criteria had been spelt out.

Paula stated that the meetings that had been promised needed to take place as agreed and as soon as possible to allow enough time for alternatives to be looked at. Paula also circulated a letter from the Voluntary, Community and Faith Partnership setting out their position position.

Bruce Penhale reported that consultation would start 30th December to enable the council to look at alternative funding and how to mitigate the impact. The proposals had been set within the Council's budget position and the council was trying to manage a very difficult position. Bruce acknowledged the need for better communication and suggested that three people be nominated for discussions on the issues. Paula stated that consultation should've taken place before the proposals were formed and that voluntary groups had not been involved at all. Communication had been poor and the situation was now urgent and asked the OPE to press the council to suspend the proposals. Nick Brown replied that having listened to the statements made by the Council and some of the Voluntary Groups that the best role the Partnership could play would be to urge both sides to develop a framework for communication and to find a way of resolving the present issue and that the Partnership and Exec. would be quite happy to help in this matter. Bruce added that unfortunately the budget demanded that cuts were required and that this required painful decisions to be made. David McGealy stated that the issue was the fact that the VCFP had not been involved and the organizations that were affected were being left out. Paula highlighted that the budgets cuts would have an impact on service users and there was an urgent need for contingency plans to be developed. Gail Richards commented that plans needed to be made for the long term and that other funding sources needed to be found in addition to the "right here, right now" issue. She endorsed the need for fortnightly meetings and to pool the knowledge of the Partnership. Paula also highlighted the fact that risk assessments had not been completed. Cllr Thompson stated that it was not a case that the Council were not going to fund but that Priority Programme Funding had been going for several years and active efforts were being made within the council to find alternative funding, for example through directorate budgets. Charles Shaw added that changes in the voluntary sector would have to meet community needs. Paula also added that the voluntary sector was not adverse to change or adaptation but there needed to be a transparent procedure and the changes needed to be managed well.

There followed a discussion regarding the mandate of the Partnership on this issue and Paula Boshell stated that the letters her organisation had received were in the name of the Partnership and not OMBC. Jennet Peters offered GONW support to resolving the issue.

It was **agreed** that weekly meeting would take place from January and that someone from the Executive would attend, that the GONW would attend as an independent element, that each block would have a stake and that terms of reference for those meetings would be drafted and fed to John Eley.

A further comment was made with reference to minute 42/08 in that the action required by Andrew Kilburn had been taken and the Community Cohesion Strategy had been amended.

ACTION: Bruce Penhale would organise weekly meetings from January and John Eley would oversee the terms of reference.

48/08 LAA Update: Children & Young People Block

Tim Mitchell presented an update.

Gail Richards referred to page 3 of the report and asked whether the Executive had oversight for the LSP because she felt that an independent chair was required to hold the LSP to account. She also endorsed longer term planning because she felt that funding matters were too important to be left to annual debates.

Michele Carr commented that Child Poverty sits in the Economy and Enterprise Block unusually and she emphasised the need for reports from Children's block to include updates on child poverty to encourage cross-commission work.

The recommendations within the report were noted.

49/08 Responding to Economic Climate

In response to Michele's presentation, Gail Richards suggested a March workshop before agreeing the plan.

Phil Sumner added that Asian Groups and Credit Unions needed to be involved and suggested obtaining feedback from the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

Paula Boshell commented that economic downturn would impact on service delivery, as would the increase in demand for services.

David McGealy complimented on the quality of the report.

The recommendations within the report were noted.

50/08 SCS/LAA Review and Refresh / The Evolving LSP Structure

John Eley presented his report.

David McGealy asked where the VCFP would sit and how a dialogue would be introduced.

Carol Hopkins commented that she did not think this was the correct model to use and that the decision making process was unclear and highlighted that the public were concerned with effective service delivery and were not bothered about the processes.

Cllr Thompson agreed with Carol and stated that the public see silo working but may not view it as a positive thing.

51/08 Transformational Change: Allocating Area Based Grant

John Eley presented his report.

Phil Sumner queried whether anyone was representing the VCFP on the Public Service Board.

Carol Hopkins highlighted that the biggest funding cut was in the Economy block and that the current economic climate needed to be taken in to account.

Marie Gillott was surprised at the funding cut as unemployment was rising by approximately 200 people very month.

Gail Richards added that the PSB was in its early stages and that they would not have seen this report or the breakdown of figures.

52/08 Focusing on lives not services (transforming social care)

Mark Reynolds was not available to present his report.

Gail Richards commented that the report informed the board of exiting policies but concrete examples were needed and suggested that feedback was provided for the next presentation.

David McGealy expressed concerns about the report content and felt that people were not listening.

Nick Brown stated that those able to respond were not present today.

ACTION: An appropriate person to attend the next meeting to be able to answer questions on the report (Tom Wolstencroft)

53/08 LAA Reward Grant

This item was for information only.

The recommendations within the report were noted.

54/08 Oldhaminfo

Ian Flanagan-Smith highlighted the success of Oldhaminfo and that the partnership between the Partnership and the PCT was working well.

Paula Boshell highlighted how important this was.

Michele Carr informed the meeting that regeneration activities were available on the OMBC website and thought that the two systems needed to talk to each other.

Ian stated that a “one stop shop” website was in the process of being developed and any ideas or suggestions were welcomed.

John Eley stated that thanks to the PCT a joint post would be created to enable this and is further evidence of partnership working.

Ian’s contact number is 0161 770 5257 for any updates.

The recommendations within the report were noted.

55/08 Dates of future meetings

- 19th March 2009
- 18th June 2009
- 17th September 2009
- 17th December 2009

56/08 Agenda items for future meeting at this stage

- Update: Healthier Communities and Older People Block
- Focusing on lives not services (transforming social care) – presentation to be given

57/08 Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 19th March 2009

Venue: Groundwork Environment Centre, Shaw Road, Higginshaw

Time: 2pm

The meeting closed at 15.55.