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OLDHAM HIGHLY COMMENDED AT LGC AWARDS

Oldham Council and the Oldham Partnership were celebrating on Monday evening after great success at the prestigious Local Government Chronicle (LGC) awards at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London.

Oldham Council was Highly Commended, along with Salford City Council, in the Most Improved Council of the Year category, which was won by Rotherham Borough Council. The Oldham Partnership was the only finalist to be Highly Commended for the Local Strategic Partnership Award, which was won by Tower Hamlets.

The teams, which travelled to London to represent the Borough, were made up of members of the Council's Senior Management Team plus winners of the Council's Star Awards, which recognises outstanding staff, and a team of representatives from the Oldham Partnership.

Oldham was one of only six councils in the country to reach the short-list stage. In order to reach a final decision judges visited the Council in February and met with frontline staff, service managers, councillors and partners to look at service improvement first hand.

The LGC is the leading local government magazine read by council workers across the country and it is a great honour for the Council and the Oldham Partnership to be Highly Commended by the judges in these awards. The award is national recognition for the improvements taking place in Oldham and the hard work being carried out across the Borough by Council staff, partners and residents.

The Council's LGC award submission focused on Alexandra Park as a case study to illustrate the great improvements made in Oldham since the disturbances in 2001. Alexandra Park has become a symbol of Oldham's progress showing improvements both in community cohesion and corporate and service management.

The submission also demonstrated a number of the Council's major achievements over the past few years including: the Council's CPA assessment of two stars and improving well; Oldham Partnerships success in winning the LGC Partnership Award for Sustainable Communities; the opening of University Centre Oldham; the regeneration of the Hollinwood Junction: the Boroughs improving educational results and improvements in financial management as recognised by the Audit Commission and the Council's social care services for adults being awarded a two star rating.

The Oldham Partnership's submission illustrated how the Local Strategic Partnership provides a framework through which long-term improvements to the Borough are being made. It covered areas as diverse as housing, community cohesion, crime, education, regeneration and the local economy, as well as more immediate issues that are dealt with through local Area Action Teams, such as Anti Social Behaviour and Street Clean-Ups.

Chief Executive Andrew Kilburn said: "This is wonderful achievement which demonstrates the hard work and dedication to service improvement going on across the Council. We are delighted to have been Highly Commended by the LGC, but we all recognise that there is still much more that can be done. I am confident that we will make further progress. We are committed to providing excellent services for residents across the Borough and our goal is to continue to be a winning Council."

Council Leader David Jones added: "To come Highly Commended for this national award is proof of the major changes going on across the Borough of Oldham. It demonstrates to our residents and national decision makers, that we are a fast changing local authority with a bright future ahead of us."

Chair of the Oldham Partnership Executive and Principal of Oldham Sixth Form College Nick Brown said: "Our colleagues nationally are always amazed at how many talented and dedicated people there are in Oldham who have a genuine desire to improve the Borough. The Oldham Partnership provides a framework to enable these people to make a lasting difference to life in Oldham, and I think they should take a great deal of pride in their work".

Ends

