

GONW HIGHLIGHT REPORT ON OLDHAM LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

April 2006 to March 2007

1) Summary

Oldham has made good progress overall with implementation of the LAA. The LAA has been a catalyst for strengthening partnership working and introducing a more systematic approach to commissioning of activities.

There are some targets where outcomes to date have been disappointing and these are highlighted below.

There are several targets where it has not been possible to gather performance data including some where it has not been possible to gather the data to set a baseline from which to measure performance. In future it will be important to give careful consideration when choosing performance indicators and setting targets to where data will be found and who will be responsible for collecting and preparing relevant information.

2) Risks to the achievement of outcomes

- **Crime** – end of year outcome well below target after a period of improvement. Oldham's performance was in line with regional trends but disappointing none the less. Action has now been taken to re-focus resources and in recent months crime figures have improved. One reason that crime may have risen is that Police and other partners in Oldham had to divert resources to investigations of child sexual exploitation and also drugs offences. For reasons of operational confidentiality it was not possible to publicly explain this diversion of resources at the time. This approach was taken with the active support of partner organisations.
- **Waste Recycling** – there have been delays in implementing the new waste collection strategy but this has now been moved forward and this is now back on track.
- **Housing** – there is a lot of good work going on and Oldham has more than achieved its stretch target for reduction in homeless acceptances. There has been an increase in the use of B&B and this remains a major issue.
- **CYP** – Oldham is one of the most improved areas but continues to face substantial difficulties. **Racist bullying** – while the figures look high it is a consequence of having established rigorous reporting systems and weekly reporting. So Oldham is proud of action that has been taken in this area and believes that it is producing more reliable data than many other areas that appear to be reporting much lower numbers. There has been extensive partnership work in the borough on hate crime and bullying.

- **NEETs** – while the numbers are up this is in line with other areas in the region and Oldham has done particularly well to reduce the number of young people whose destination is ‘not known’.
- **Teenage conceptions** – while recent data shows that conception rates are falling (improving) in Oldham it remains at a high level relative to national averages. It is an issue across the borough and all secondary schools have reported at least one incidence.
- **School Attainment** – last year’s KS3 results did not meet targets. The LA reports that schools greater confidence that they will meet these targets this year.
- **Health** – Oldham is one of only 3 areas in the region that are showing an improvement in internal health inequalities. Good progress on smoking targets (except for smoking in pregnancy). Oldham’s infant mortality rate is significantly worse than the England average and will need to be addressed.
- **Social Care** – now putting a greater emphasis on preventative services, more electronic home monitoring etc. Have opened a new carers centre run by the voluntary sector.
- **Economic and employment** – Slow start to reward target IB project means that this did not meet year one targets. Also not meeting target re reducing worklessness. But Oldham has a good understanding of what needs to be done in the economic area; the LEGL bid was not successful but has stimulated a more strategic approach to local action.

3) The impact of the LAA and strong performance

The LAA has come at the right time for Oldham. It has been a catalyst to strengthen and streamline partnership working. They have also introduced a more systematic approach to commissioning work. The LSP is now considering moving toward forming a public service board for the borough. The LSP is approaching work on the LAA in a positive and collaborative way.

4) Neighbourhood Renewal Report

Good progress is being made on the **Housing** and **Liveability** NR targets. Oldham has faced real challenges in the reduction of comparator **crime** offences, especially in the most deprived wards but current and planned interventions should have a positive impact.

Good progress in narrowing the gap in **educational** attainment at Key Stage 3 for Maths and Science but the gap has widened for English and the gap has also widened within the Borough. There has been progress at GCSE and the gap with England is narrowing. There is also a narrowing of the gap at GCSE within the Borough and with good improvements in performance for certain schools.

Health inequalities are an issue, men can expect to live 74.2 years and women 79.2 years which is less than the regional and national average and there is a considerable gap in life expectancy between the poorest and most affluent areas. Although the gap with the England average is narrowing for women the gap is not reducing for men.

Worklessness is a real issue. There are high levels of unemployment and high rates of benefit claimants particularly in the most deprived wards and for particular groups. The

IB claimant rate in the priority wards is almost double the average for the remaining wards. This has a knock on effect on health, well-being and crime levels for example.

5) Finance Issues

Oldham has spent the LAA block grant in line with allocations. Revenue spending varies from the allocation by 1% overall which is acceptable. There is an underspend of £18k in the capital allocation but this is largely accounted for by slippage on a single area of activity.

David Davies
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