

The review of Area Based Grant (ABG)

Factsheet two: The challenge panel in more detail

If you have any questions about the review of area based grant, please contact the Oldham Partnership support team on 0161 770 3199 or info@oldhampartnership.org.uk

Background

The ABG review challenge panel will meet twice, on 27 May from 10.30am to 12.30pm and on 10 June from 3pm to 5pm. Panel members *may* decide they need to meet again if business isn't completed in these two meetings.

In between the meetings, any additional information the panel request will be collected. The panel will be chaired by Nick Brown, from Oldham Sixth Form College and chair of the Oldham Partnership executive. Members of the panel will be:

- Cllrs Howard Sykes and Lynne Thompson, Oldham Council
- Safe and strong communities board, Chief Superintendent Tim Forber, Greater Manchester Police
- Economy and enterprise board, Elaine McLean, Oldham Council
- Health and wellbeing board, Gail Richards, NHS Oldham
- Childrens Trust, Tim Mitchell, Positive Steps Oldham
- Voluntary, community and faith sector, Liz Windsor Welsh, Voluntary Action Oldham
- Private sector, Dave Benstead, Zetex Diodes

Staff from the council and partnership team will also be at the meetings to support the process.

The overall aims of the panel are

- To assess the impact of activity currently commissioned through ABG against the priorities in Oldham Partnership's prospectus (www.oldhampartnership.org.uk/oldham-prospectus)
- To consider the costs and benefits of each activity (or proposed costs and benefits if the activity has not yet started)
- To understand the broader implications of panel decisions on services and outcomes,
- To make recommendations about what needs to be retained or decommissioned, or about whether we need to re-think how we deliver a service.

How will the panel receive the information?

The panel will be presented with details of all activity that is currently commissioned through ABG and any other funding sources which have been added to the pot. The information will be presented in a matrix which will allow them to quickly and easily view and compare the details of each activity. The matrix was approved by the Oldham Partnership executive.

As you will be aware, commissioned activity has been grouped according to the prospectus priorities:

- **Towards a university town**, this includes
 - o Worklessness
 - o Skills and educational attainment

The key drivers of this priority are the Greater Manchester strategy (which was developed from the Manchester area agreement and the Manchester independent economic review) and the Oldham children and young people plan.

- **Great places to live**, this includes
 - o Reducing crime
 - o Street cleanliness
 - o Positive activities for young people

The key drivers of this priority are the crime strategic assessment, the children and young people plan and Think Family

- **Healthy lives**, this includes
 - o Active people
 - o Reducing the harm done by alcohol
 - o Helping them to be empowered; to increase their independence and aspirations

Within these priorities, activities which contribute to the same outcomes are grouped into clusters. They will then be reviewed against the following key criteria:

- Is the activity making a direct impact on one of the issues within the prospectus?
- Is the approach plausible and is there evidence that it is the right intervention to achieve the required outcomes and to meet a need?
- Does the activity make an impact on a prospectus priority? Can we present evidence to show this?
- What would happen if the activity was no longer there? What impact would there be on partner organisations?

Do delivery agents need to attend the panel?

Those organisations who have been commissioned to deliver an activity – delivery agents – don't need to attend either of the challenge panel meetings. The partnership support team will ensure that delivery agents hear the outcomes of the challenge meetings, and know whether they need to take further action as soon as possible after the process is complete. Delivery agents' involvement

will continue to be vital as we go through the review process and your cooperation and understanding so far is much appreciated.

The panel's relationship to the wider Oldham Partnership

The panel will report its findings to Oldham Partnership's executive on 24 June 2010.

If the panel needs any guidance from the partnership during the process, this will be provided by the partnership's public service board, which challenge panel chair Nick Brown attends. (The partnership's executive delegates certain work – including providing advice on the specifics of the review - to the public service board).

The challenge panel won't make decisions itself, it will make recommendations. The partnership executive will consider and approve the final findings on 23 September. The partnership's steering group will be kept informed and have the opportunity to comment on the panel's recommendations.

The principles of the challenge panel

Guidelines have been set on how the panels will operate. These state the panel meetings will be clear, productive and focused on business. Panel members will be expected to act in the best interests of Oldham and not their individual organisations or portfolios. Members of the panel will need to uphold the values and objectives of the panel and the partnership, and share responsibility for its decisions.

Panel members will:

- Agree to work together in partnership, with values of honesty, integrity, trust and transparency
- Agree to work within the strategic framework set by the Oldham Partnership in the Oldham sustainable community strategy, local area agreement and prospectus, and the Greater Manchester strategy.
- Be action focused. The panel will develop a shared and monitored operational work programme from Oldham's strategic priorities.
- Agree to be a partnership of equals, and agree that each organisation and individual is entitled to their own views and perspective
- Recognise that they will achieve more by working together, and that they work together in the interests of Oldham and its residents
- Agree to focus its work on those activities where it can add most value working as a partnership of agencies
- Shape the panel's work and meeting agenda with their understanding of their area of work and programmes of activity

The role of Oldham Council

Oldham Council is ultimately responsible for area based grant. The council is allowed to use ABG as they see fit to support the delivery of local, regional and national priorities in Oldham. The council delegates the allocation, commissioning and programme management of ABG to Oldham Partnership.

The council's role is to:

- Formally consider and endorse the decisions of the partnership, and incorporate ABG spending plans in the council budget
- Act as the accountable body for the grant. This means it will make sure we comply with financial and audit requirements, and ensure proper regulation, financial propriety, value for money and robust audit trails

The role of partner organisations

After the partnership executive reviews the panel's recommendations, the decisions will be reported to the boards of partner organisations. They will be able to identify and comment on potential implications for their organisation. This will help us to minimise any risks to the services we provide.

Appealing against review decisions

An appeals process will be put in place once the recommendations and outcomes of the panel have been agreed. The appeals process is currently being drawn up. More information will be provided as soon as it is finalised.

Where can I get help?

Oldham Partnership is absolutely committed to this ABG review being an open and public process.

We will continue to keep you informed through out the process and information will be available on the partnership's website www.oldhampartnership.org.uk/reviewing-abg.

The partnership's support team fully understands that this is a challenging period, and can offer support every step of the way. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call Alison Vaughan on 0161 770 3199 or John Eley on 0161 770 5254.

Thank you for your support.