



[www.oldhampartnership.org.uk](http://www.oldhampartnership.org.uk)

## CONFERENCE REPORT 2005

### "Local Area Agreements: The F Words - Funding, Freedom and Flexibility"

27th September 2005

Pennine Way Hotel, Oldham.

**The half-day event looked at the progress that has been made by the Oldham Partnership over the past year, and the challenges that lie ahead. Particular attention was paid to the development of Oldham's Local Area Agreement, which will be delivered through the Oldham Partnership structure, and could be worth up to £40m per annum to the Borough.**

**Copies of the presentations are available on the website.**



The speakers at the Conference were:- **Gail Richards** (pictured above, Chief Executive, Oldham PCT); **Nick Brown** (Principal, Oldham Sixth Form College); **David Davies** (Government Office North West); **Andrew Kilburn** (Chief Executive, Oldham Council); **Paul Makin** (Interim Executive Director of Children's Services, Oldham Council); **Alan Higgins** (Director of Public Health; Oldham PCT); **Inspector John Taylor** (Local Authority Liaison Officer, Greater Manchester Police); **David Benstead** (Director of People, Organisations and Systems, Zetex Semiconductors Plc); **Cllr Peter Dean** (Cabinet Member for Housing & Partnerships, Oldham Council); **David Hillary** (Community Empowerment Team Co-ordinator, Voluntary Action Oldham).

**'Oldham - a place where everyone is proud to belong'**

## **PROGRESS THIS YEAR**

The last 12 months in Oldham has seen the Partnership make great progress. The hard work that has taken place is now beginning to bear fruit, and will see the Partnership continue to be more effective. Some of the key achievements this year are:

- The Commissioning Framework. Developed with Deloittes, this will see the Partnership commission work and allocate funds in accordance with the strategic priorities.
- Performance Management Framework. This has been fully implemented over the past year, and allows the Partnership to assess progress against its priorities.
- Governance & Structure. Changes to the Partnership structure ensure that it is robust enough to face the challenges of the Local Area Agreement.

The work of the Partnership can also be seen in more tangible projects:

- Oldham Beyond. The 1,000 Day Campaign has been launched, Alexandra Park has been nationally recognised with Green Flag status, and the £18m Lifelong Learning Centre is nearing completion.
- Opening of University Centre Oldham. Officially opened in May 2005. A key milestone in Oldham Beyond, which will see 3,000 extra students in the town by 2010.
- Cottoning On Project. Works to reduce health inequalities in the Borough, and won the Improving Health & Reducing Inequalities Award for the North of England.



## **CHALLENGES FOR THE COMING YEAR**

The Amber-Green score we received from Government Office North West in this year's Annual Review is an indication that the Oldham Partnership is moving in the right direction. The key challenge for the Partnership in the next year is to build on this, and start delivering results for the people of Oldham. The first phase of the Partnership has been characterised by sorting out issues around communication, membership and inclusiveness. The Partnership now needs to accelerate the pace of change in Oldham, and make a lasting difference for the people of the Borough.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) provides the platform to do this. Oldham's inclusion in the second round of LAA pilots is a sign of Government's belief that Oldham can deliver real change. The Partnership must now show that it can.

## **LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS – A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

The Oldham Partnership has the opportunity to demonstrate the improvements it has made through the effective delivery of a Local Area Agreement. The objectives of the LAA are:

- Focus on the priority outcomes, which are shared by all members of the Partnership.
- Simplify the number of funding streams.
- Allow greater flexibility to address local priorities.
- Devolve decision making to a local level, and reduce bureaucracy.

## LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS – OLDHAM’S PERSPECTIVE

The role of the Oldham Partnership is to deliver positive change for the Borough of Oldham, and the Local Area Agreement provides an ideal opportunity to do this. The key theory of change which underpins Oldham’s LAA is **“Increasing life opportunities for all”**. A number of central themes are consistent in Oldham’s submission:

- The need to build community cohesion.
- Targeting need – “narrowing the gap” between different communities and neighbourhoods in the Borough.
- Developing local efficiencies, and reducing bureaucracy.
- Transformational change for the LSP.

Oldham has introduced a fifth “block” into its Local Area Agreement, centred around Housing. This has an impact on many of the challenges that Oldham faces, and merits its inclusion as a separate block in the Agreement.



Presenting at the Conference:  
Cllr Peter Dean



David Benstead

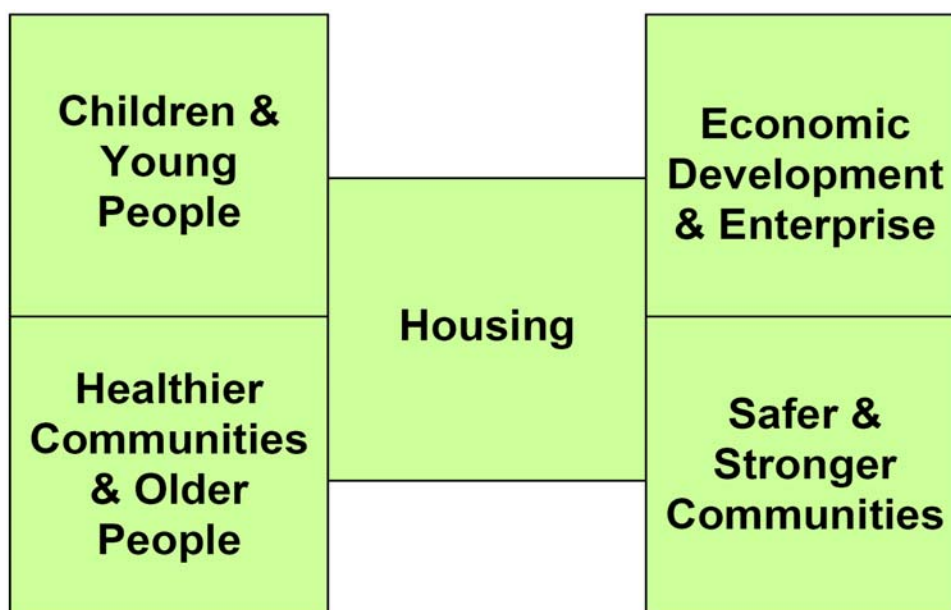


Andrew Kilburn

## CONFERENCE VIDEO

The Conference saw the “*world premiere*” of a video that showed how the Oldham Partnership is making a real and positive difference to the lives of people in the Borough. The video included interviews with residents of the Borough, and received excellent feedback from those that attended the event. Copies of the DVD are available (free of charge) from the Oldham Partnership Support Team. Please call 0161 615 5024 for more information.

## THE 5 BLOCKS OF OLDHAM’S LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT



## **KEY THEORIES OF CHANGE** - the strap line that reflects the aim of that block:

**Children & Young People:** "Enabling children and young people to lead healthy, active lives and be highly skilled, educated and socially responsible."

**Healthier Communities & Older People:** "Creating more opportunities to enable citizens to lead healthy, active and longer lives."

**Safer & Stronger Communities:** "Tackling crime and fear of crime and creating better neighbourhoods."

**Economic Development & Enterprise:** "Improving employment opportunities for local people, addressing skills attainment and creating an environment to encourage entrepreneurship and investment."

**Housing:** "Meeting the needs in all neighbourhoods / communities to provide affordable and decent homes and give support to those who need it."

An overview of the priorities and the key outcomes for the LAA blocks was given by each speaker, and were used in the workshops. The presentations can be found on the Oldham Partnership website ([www.oldhampartnership.org.uk](http://www.oldhampartnership.org.uk)).

## **THE VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY & FAITH SECTOR IN OLDHAM'S LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT**

The Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector (VCS) contributes £36m to the Oldham economy each year, and includes 900 organisations and 11,000 employees and volunteers. In addition to building capacity for voluntary organisations, the VCS delivers services in its own right. The sector is represented on the Oldham Partnership Executive & Steering Group, and has representation on each of the LAA block working groups.

The VCS "officially" resides in the Safer & Stronger Communities Block of the LAA, and the entire Community Empowerment Fund budget will be aligned into this block of the LAA. However, one of the challenges that Oldham is addressing through its Local Area Agreement is that the VCS can be used across the board to deliver services that meet the targets in the LAA.



David Hillary, Community Empowerment Co-ordinator from Voluntary Action Oldham.

## **WORKSHOP SESSIONS**

Each block of the LAA was discussed during the workshop session. The workshops looked at the following questions:

- Do we have the correct outcomes and indicators to reflect the priorities for Oldham?
- Can we identify any other funding streams that could be included in the LAA?
- How can we use the LAA to streamline and reduce bureaucracy in Oldham?
- What are the freedoms and flexibilities that we seek from Government to deliver more effectively against our priorities?

The discussions in each of the workshops have been fed back into the Local Area Agreement negotiations and incorporated into the submission to Government Office.

## **WORKSHOP SESSIONS (cont'd)**

The workshops also looked at:

- How can the Local Area Agreement be used to improve the Oldham Partnership?

The suggestions included:

- Reducing bureaucracy wherever possible
- Improving the flexibility of the Partnership
- Using the LAA as a catalyst for restructuring the Partnership
- Partnership structure could reflect the 5 LAA blocks
- Combine reporting mechanisms
- Focus communication on joint targets



Members of the Oldham Partnership playing an active role in the development of the Local Area Agreement and the Partnership during the workshop sessions.

## **NEXT STEPS**

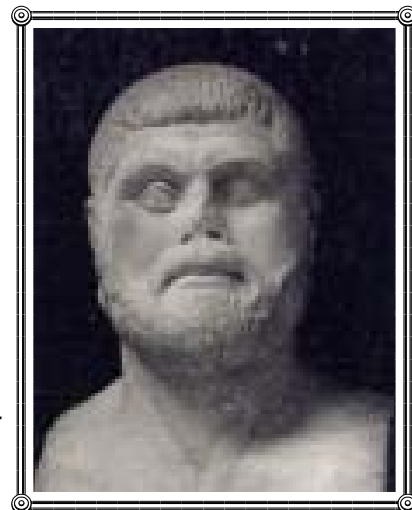
The latest draft of Oldham's Local Area Agreement was submitted to Government in the first week of October. A series of negotiations will now follow between the Oldham Partnership and Government Office North West, before the final version of the Agreement is agreed at the end of January 2006, and signed off for implementation on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006.

## **OLDHAM – A MODERN ATHENS**

One of the great thinkers and strategists from Ancient Greece was Themistocles (pictured, insert), who was a leading politician for the Athenians during the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC. In 493BC, the Athenians discovered a massive surplus in their silver mine, which gave them unanticipated wealth. It was thought that the surplus should be shared out equally amongst the population, so they could all experience it at first hand. With this extra income, families would be able to buy goats and cattle to provide regular food and milk. However, Themistocles argued that the surplus should instead be invested in a commonly owned fleet of ships. He believed that by combining their wealth they would open up more opportunities, and enjoy the benefits for years to come. On his suggestion, the Athenian fleet grew from 70 to 200 ships.

The Athenians were under threat at the time from the dominant force in the region, the Persians. This came to a head in 480BC at the Battle of Salamis. With their superior fleet, the Athenians defeated the Persians, and the victory laid the foundations for the great Athenian Empire.

With the introduction of the Local Area Agreement in Oldham, the story from Ancient Greece is very apt. The LAA gives us the opportunity to work together, and achieve more than we would be able to do individually. We may not defeat the Persians in a naval battle, but we can certainly make a lasting difference to the Borough of Oldham.



**Oldham Partnership Support Team**  
**Oldham Business Centre, Cromwell Street, Oldham, OL1 1BB**

**T 0161 615 5024    F 0161 615 5039**  
**E [info@oldhampartnership.org.uk](mailto:info@oldhampartnership.org.uk)**  
**W [www.oldhampartnership.org.uk](http://www.oldhampartnership.org.uk)**

**'Oldham - a place where everyone is proud to belong'**