

Minutes

Credit crunch war cabinet (CCWC)

11 June 2009

The Leader's office

2pm

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| Present: | Cllr Howard Sykes (chair) Elaine McLean Nick Brown Cliff Ellison Michele Carr Jon Bloor Michelle Ford Viv Robinson Kath Thomas Dave Catherall Karen McCrackle Nick Cumberland | Oldham Council Oldham Council Oldham Sixth Form College Groundwork Oldham Council Oldham Council LSC Jobcentre Plus The Oldham College Oldham Partnership Oldham Partnership Oldham Council |
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| Apologies: | Chief Supt Caroline Ball Marie Gillott | GMP Jobcentre Plus |
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1-3 Welcome and apologies, minutes of last meeting & matters arising

The minutes were approved.

4 Declarations of interest

None were made

5 Economic dashboard and intelligence report

Dashboard headlines this month:

- There was a rise in the total number of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants, but the borough saw a reduction in number of people coming on to JSA in April 2009. The gap between on and off flow is reducing – an encouraging sign.
- There were fewer Jobcentre Plus (JCP) vacancies in April than March but it should be noted this doesn't necessarily reflect the total number of available vacancies.
- The wards with the highest rates of JSA claimants have seen small increases; Again, the outer ring of wards – notably Chadderton North and Chadderton Central – are seeing a significant increase. There have been particular reductions

in Werneth and St Pauls.

- NEET figures are as yet unconfirmed but on target. Oldham's NEET figures are very close to the England average and significantly better than our statistical neighbours
- Anecdotally more people are now presenting with mental health issues.

ACTIONS:

- **A hard copy of the dashboard to be provided to Lori Hughes for HS's regular meeting with Oldham's MPs**
- **Actual figures as well as percentages are to be given for JSA claimant rates**
- **We need to ensure we engage any NEET young people we work with through the summer activities programme**

6 Housing in Oldham and the North West

NC said house prices are still dropping, but new build prices had increased between quarter 2 and quarter 4 of 2008 and are still higher than in 2007. The volume of new homes being sold is also holding steady.

As previously discussed at CCWC, the biggest drops were in prices for flats and detached houses; with the prices for semi detached and terraced homes falling less. In certain areas, such as Chadderton, there are so few homes on the market that demand is causing prices to rise.

Nationally, both Nationwide and Halifax reported an increase in the average house price in May.

Three households reported themselves as homeless to First Choice Homes in May. Colleagues are working closely with any households at risk of being made homeless. The mortgage rescue scheme is being used when other options have been exhausted; currently three uses of the scheme are likely to come to fruition.

ACTION:

- **The general housing update that was presented at the strategic housing partnership to be shared with CCWC**

7 Roadshow update

JB presented a scoping paper. The first business event has taken place and was extremely successful; attracting 50 people from 36 businesses.

Plans for further roadshows are being developed, including a community reporters scheme to equip residents with the skills to report good news. We are working closely with the Chronicle, specifically through their Oldham Works supplement, the BBC and Oldham Community Radio.

ACTION:

- **Roadshow team to note the need for activities in the west of Oldham**

8 Future Jobs Fund update

JB reported that the Future Jobs Fund is intended to provide jobs for the benefit of the community for 18 to 24 year olds who have been unemployed for over 9 months. Oldham's approach to this is to ensure that any new provision dovetails with existing services such as the Get Oldham Back On Track programme.

Government has asked us to provide the number of opportunities we can offer across public sector partners. Oldham has given a comparatively low figure because we are clear that the employment opportunities must be sustainable and must offer young people real skills and experience.

There is a possibility that we offer these opportunities as a precursor to young people joining our apprentice scheme. This will be investigated.

An idea to employ young people to create a nature reserve along the Metrolink line was noted.

ACTION:

- **A possible link between the Future Jobs Fund opportunities and the apprentice scheme to be investigated**

9 **Credit crunch campaign**

The CCWC looked at the emails received to date. There has been a low number so far. The email address will be promoted on the online credit crunch advice pages, and in as many other ways as possible.

10 **Verbal updates**

- a) Benefit take up campaign

Work is underway to ensure residents get all of the benefits they are entitled to. We are currently mapping what partners do to encourage people to take up benefits, and will identify any gaps and opportunities from there. A full report will come to the next CCWC.

- b) Redundancy notifications

The council have been working with staff at Zetex Diodes, 100 of whom were made redundant, and Trendsetter, where 20 employees were affected.

Currently, three more organisations will be given support: Ribble Packaging, who are making 10 employees redundant, and Mobilis and Express Gifts, both of whom have 100 staff at risk. We need to know as early as possible if other organisations are in similar situations.

There are some issues about our capacity to work as intensively as we would want to (using the Slumberland model) with these organisations.

Members commented that whilst new programmes are coming through from Government, they each have strict guidelines that make it difficult to tailor them to Oldham's circumstances. This will be relayed to our MPs.

c) Targeted support fund

Oldham has been allocated £190,000 for voluntary organisations to provide recession support. The fund is administered by the Community Development Foundation (CDF) and will be allocated by a panel in July, with money being available to successful organisations on 1 September.

CDF have confirmed that we can work with organisations to shape their proposed projects to ensure we get the best value from them.

ACTION:

- **Full report on the benefit take up work to come to the next CCWC**
- **A report on capacity to deliver support to local businesses and what will be needed to deliver the 'Slumberland model' more widely if need be to come to the next CCWC**
- **Briefing note to be written for our MPs, asking for support programmes to have fewer strings attached**
- **A case study of an ex-Slumberland employee helped to be included in Oldham Works if possible**

11 **AOB**

A report was presented asking the CCWC to underwrite the costs of reducing on street parking fees. This is an extremely important issue for traders, and another meeting has been convened to decide exactly how the scheme will work. The CCWC agreed to underwrite the costs.

12 **Dates of next meetings**

Meeting dates from September onwards have been circulated. HS suggested that we review the frequency of meetings in October.

The next meeting is 6 July, 10am, in HS's office.