



# Minutes

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## UNITY PARTNERSHIP BOARD

6 December 2017

Members' Meeting Room - Civic Centre, Oldham, OL1 1NL

4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillors Dean, Jabbar and McCann

Also in Attendance

Sian Walter-Browne

Fran Lautman

Simon Miller

Tony Muir

Constitutional Services

Customer Development Manager, Oldham Council

Service Delivery Director, Unity Partnership

Operations Director, Kier

### 1 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stretton, Councillor Ur-Rehman, Councillor Sykes and Ian Meredith.

### 2 Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the Unity Partnership Board meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017 were approved as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

### 3 Management Update Report (Standing Item)

Consideration was given to a progress report of the Unity Management Team on the performance of the services delivered by the Partnership. The Board were informed that the main focus was around ensuring delivery.

The Service Delivery Director presented the report and addressed the enquiries from the Board Members.

#### Highways

The Board were informed that the Highways Service had continued with its recruitment drive following significant staff turnover that had occurred this year and the team had almost returned to full compliment. The Service had been constantly reviewing priorities in order to mitigate non-delivery of Council capital schemes despite the resource issue being experienced. The service continued to deliver through its KPIs and development of its relationship with the Council.

### Property

The Service was continuing to operate the 16/17 Work Plan in the current financial year and this would continue to protect the level of service provided by Unity to the Council until the end of March 2018. The Council's School Capital Programme was successfully designed and project managed which resulted in successful re-opening at the start of the new term. Significant work has also been completed successfully in relation to the University Technical College and Oldham Council's Civic building.

The Board was informed that the long term intention was to revise the overall provision of Property Services to provide a more strategic property offer to the Council and Unity had continued to work closely with the Council to progress the Strategic Property Programme (formerly known as 'Option 4'). This had the potential to provide the following benefits to the Council:

- Reduction in Council operating costs of operational buildings; potentially around circa £2m per annum;
- Increase of net income for the Council for their investment property portfolio by circa £3m per annum.

### Revenues

The Board noted that seven new online discount application forms had been introduced, including single person discount. The debt recovery system, One Step, was being upgraded to the online version 7 which would allow better reporting options and improved case loading and payment uploading.

### Benefits

The Benefits teams continued to work on and support the successful implementation of e-notifications for benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims. In addition, all new Business Rate changes at short notice had been implemented with good application responses so far.

The team were currently on track and meeting KPIs; supporting residents in their applications and providing advice and guidance for those needing to claim Universal Credit.

Looking ahead, the team were working with the Council's Resident First team to ensure the effective and successful go-live of e-notifications for benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims, meaning that residents could receive the outcome of their claims more quickly and efficiently.

### Transactional Finance (Accounts Payable and Receivable)

A recovery service continued to be provided of overpaid Housing Benefit owed in respect of First Choice Homes (FCHO) tenancies.

### Contact Centre

The Contact Centre achieved the aspirational target across all four KPIs in Q2 of 2017/18. In October, further in-year school transfer enquiries were successfully taken on by the Contact Centre.

### HR (Advisory and Payroll)

Within the Payroll area, the Service was going through a transformation programme to ensure readiness for the closure of the A1 programme and transition to business as usual.

There were a number of change programmes being to drive efficiencies and stabilisation, to ensure delivery of an excellent customer experience to the Council on a legally compliant platform.

### IT

A prioritised list of projects had been agreed with the Council to ensure a joint focus on delivery is maintained. Detail of these was set out in the report.

Current activity in supporting transformation was outlined and future transformation activity. An update was also provided on the transformation days available to the Council and those allocated to date.

### Get Oldham Working and Volunteering

Support for Get Oldham Working was outlined and included adding to the team of apprenticeships and staff volunteering.

### KPI Performance

The Board noted the KPI Performance from August to September 2017. Reporting issues were being reviewed with a focus on service delivery.

### Growing the Partnership

The Board were informed that Unity had exhibited at Highways UK in early November. Positive discussions were underway with London Borough Hammersmith and Fulham, and the Boundary School based in Blackpool regarding the provision of Unity services

The Board **NOTED** the Management Report Update.

## **4 Annual Review 2015/16**

The Board gave consideration to a report on the Annual Review 2015/16.

The Board was informed that, across the year there were 168 instances where the KPI's had been reported on (on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis). The Services had met or surpassed the Minor Threshold on 150 instances, which equated to 89% of the total KPI's and, in 124 instances, had achieved the Aspirational Target (74% of the total).

The Board noted that in 8 instances the Services were below the Minor Threshold, 5% of the total. Of these, 3 were granted an Excusing Event, 4 were in a Verification (testing) Period, therefore no Service Credit Deduction was levied, and in 1 instance a Service Credit Deduction was charged.

The Board were informed of an additional 10 instances where an exception was reported.

The report provided a summary of performance against each service area, with full results in the '2015-16 Unity KPI Workbook'.



The Board noted the provision of a number of Transformation Days available to the Council in each year of the contract. These were available to support the transformation of services retained by the Council. The number of Transformation Days available to the Council in 2015/16 was 720 of which 749 were used.

The Council and Unity were also able to agree the use of additional 'match funded' transformation days to explore further opportunities for change (i.e. the Council and Unity each provide a day, up to a maximum of 150 provided by each party). The use of these days would be considered on a case-by-case basis, and the aim of these matched days was to:

- identify opportunities to strategic business case stage;
- develop a roadmap of strategic change;
- capture the expertise of Unity/ Kier;
- implement opportunities on a "risk/reward" basis; and
- promote and trade services to enhance the success of the public sector.

During 2015/16, 54 match funded days were used. 26 of these days were used on a Highways Transformation project. This provided a Client Transformation Project Manager for the implementation of the Highways system to replace EXOR. 28 of these days were used on a Revenues & Benefits End-to-End project which provided resource to manage the review.

The Board noted that the Diamond Programme had been delivered and signed off and that the key priority moving forward was unit pricing.

The Board **NOTED** the Annual Review 2015/16.

## **5 AOB**

There were no items of any other business.

## **6 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The Board noted the date and time of the next meeting scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 20th February 2018 at 5.30 p.m.

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and ended at 4.30 pm