

POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20/09/2022 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Alyas, Hamblett (Substitute for Councillor Williamson), Harrison and C. Phythian

Also in Attendance:
Sayyed Osman – Deputy Chief Executive
Neil Consterdine – Assistant Director – Youth, Leisure and Communities
Fiona Carr – Principal Homelessness Strategy Officer
Peter Thompson – Constitutional Services

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dean and Williamson. Councillor Hamblett attended as the substitute for Councillor Williamson.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3 URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair permitted the consideration of an additional item of business, namely 'Oldham Engagement Framework' as, part of a consultation exercise, the Committee's views thereon were required prior to its next scheduled meeting.

4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions for this meeting of the Committee to consider.

5 MINUTES

Resolved:
That the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held 26th July 2022, be approved as a correct record.

6 GREATER MANCHESTER STREETS FOR ALL STRATEGY

The Chair advised that this item had been withdrawn and would be considered at a later meeting in the municipal year.

7 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND REDUCTION STRATEGY: YEAR 1 UPDATE

The Committee scrutinised a report of the Principal Homelessness Strategy Officer, which explained that Oldham's Homelessness Prevention and Reduction and Strategy 2021-26 had now been in place for nearly one year and provided an update on progress so far with regards to the implementation of actions within the Delivery Plan.

Local authorities had a statutory responsibility to publish a Homelessness Strategy based on a review of homelessness in their district at least every five years; Oldham's current Strategy was approved by Cabinet in October 2021. The Strategy was

accompanied by a Delivery Plan which was kept under review by a multi-agency monitoring group; updates to the Delivery Plan were influenced by factors including trends in homelessness presentations, changes in legislation and other local plans and policies. Good progress had been made towards achieving actions in the Delivery Plan during the first year despite challenging circumstances including increasing homelessness both locally and nationally. However, it was anticipated that these challenges would continue as the cost-of-living crisis impacted alongside growing demand for affordable housing – making early intervention, prevention and partnership working increasingly important.

Year One of the Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy Delivery Plan had established eight actions for completion by April 2022. Six of these actions were delivered on time, with two moved to a later date due to awaiting the outcome of funding bids.

The Year One Plan had a particular focus on recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, including promoting advice to landlords and tenants to help prevent eviction and/or promote planned moves, building resources within the frontline Housing Options Team, and responding to particularly affected groups including rough sleepers and people leaving institutions such as hospitals and prisons. The plan also sought to respond to changes in legislation brought about by the Domestic Abuse Act and the new duties this placed on local authorities to provide support to victims in safe accommodation.

The Committee was informed that the main three reasons for homelessness in Oldham had remained the same for several years, being: exclusion by family; loss of private rented accommodation; and domestic abuse. Oldham and some neighbouring Greater Manchester authorities also had slightly higher levels of presentations from households leaving the Home Office's accommodation due to the numbers of placements made into the area. There was a relatively high number of presentations from people leaving institutions. This point could though have been due to effective pathways built via partnership working to help prevent rough sleeping and repeat homelessness for these households.

The Committee discussed the report in some detail, seeking clarification on the use of houses of multiple occupation (HMO's), the numbers of people presenting as homeless who were either disabled or elderly, the funding of the 'bed every night' initiative and how to maximise external funding opportunities.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.

2. That a further update report, regarding the Homelessness prevention and Reduction Strategy be presented to the Committee in approximately 12 months.
3. That the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing be encouraged to seek to maximise funding opportunities from the Local Housing Allowance.
4. The Principal Homelessness Strategy Officer be requested to circulate to members of the Committee information relating to the numbers of disabled and elderly people in the Borough who were presenting as homeless.

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PLACE BASED WORKING

The Committee scrutinised a report of the Deputy Chief Executive which advised that 'Placed Based' working was becoming a key area of transformation within the Corporate Plan, aiming to deliver more and more services and functions locally, across the Borough's five districts. The submitted report updated the Committee on current progress along with some future suggested areas of exploration to check on progress of implementation.

Place based integration (PBI) was a person-centred, 'bottom-up' approach that was being used to meet the unique needs of people in a given location. This was achieved by public and community services working together to use the best available resources whilst collaborating to share local knowledge and insight. By working in partnership with residents, it aimed to build a picture of the system from a local perspective, taking an asset-based approach that highlights the strengths, capacity, and knowledge of all individuals and groups involved.

The Committee was informed that Oldham's PBI approach has been iterative, based on testing and learning. In September 2021 a deep dive report was presented to the Authority's 'Leadership' on the role of district working and place-based integration. This provided the background and current position of district working/PBI across Oldham and its evolution over the past 10 years. The discussion with elected Members was positive, focusing on the need to progress the implementation of PBI, particularly operational arrangements and local governance.

Throughout 2021/2022 the programme has made demonstrable progress against the following areas:

- Geographical segmentation to five places, aligned to the Primary Care Networks, Neighbourhood Policing and the CVS through Action Together.
- Alignment of services to the place including Community Safety, Early Help, Neighbourhood Policing, Youth, District Teams, Social Prescribing and Community Development. Housing provider representatives agreed for each place. Further alignment is required to include

- environmental services and public protection as well as key partner agencies such as DWP.
- Progress made including co-terminus geographical and service alignment, good CVS, strong partnerships and Member engagement.
- Governance established across the partnership; Public Service Reform Board, PBI Strategic Steering Group
- Scrutiny Task and Finish Group in development focusing on key areas of PBI implementation including CVS capacity and resident awareness
- Targeted workstreams established including workforce reform, PBI Hubs, Early Intervention & Prevention, District governance
- Alignment of PBI as key enabler in the Oldham Plan
- Development of the PBI Vision and Principles to be presented at the PSR Board (September)
- Launch of Planning for Real sessions in the South, further dates planned to December including evidence profiles
- Development of a workforce plan including strength-based training
- Development of a resident offer within place focused on Cost of Living
- PBI Hub Development with key sites identified.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that initial discussion had taken place through a task and finish group which had been convened by the Chair of this Committee. The meeting discussed the implementation of place-based working and integration across the Oldham Borough and the active role that scrutiny could have within this process. The Deputy Chief Executive provided a presentation describing the Oldham journey to date, the drivers for change and opportunities associated with place-based integration and next steps.

The task and finish group highlighted the complexity of the programme which was far reaching and encompassed the whole system. This would require further discussions to examine key parts of the programme. Whilst the shift towards local delivery was welcomed, it was needed to take account of the current inconsistency and fragmentation in the types of support that residents received across the borough as well as their understanding of what the offer was.

The task and finish group had noted the important contribution made by community and voluntary partners, particularly demonstrated throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the sector faced real challenges in attracting and maintaining volunteers, particularly younger residents, as well as challenges in securing funding, managing buildings, and legal understanding as examples. There was agreement on the need for better infrastructure support.

The terms of reference for the task and finish group were circulated for Member's consideration.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the task and finish group investigating Council Policy and Implementation of Place Based Integration be formally adopted by this Committee and the terms of reference relating thereto be approved.

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OLDHAM ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Chair of the Committee reported upon the Oldham Engagement Framework that aimed to implement a shared approach to engagement across the Oldham social support system and which was being organised by representatives of Action Together.

Improving the quality and scope of engagement, co-design and co-production across the Oldham social support system had been an aim since before the Covid-19 pandemic. With an immediate response required, to tackle the Covid-19 crisis, efforts to introduce a common engagement framework had stalled.

There were in the Oldham borough an impressive range of engagement offers. These included the Doorstop Engagement Team, Oldham's Poverty and Truth Commission, the Community Champions public health programme, the Citizen's Panel and Maternity Voices Partnership on top of pre-existing approaches such as the Oldham Youth Council, the Place Based Integration Programme and the Making Every Adult Matter Partnership.

However, many of these engagement approaches existed in isolation, with resources and efforts often being duplicated. There was therefore significant potential to strategically embed the learning processes from the Covid-19 pandemic and approaches that have spread across the social support system. In doing so maximum value can be obtained from the structured and informal engagements that are taking place, resulting, hopefully, in improved long-term outcomes for residents as well as increased efficiency for planned interventions.

The Chair suggested that a way of expediting this matter would be via a workshop event where Committee members could discuss engagement approaches across the social support system with the organisers of the Oldham Engagement Framework, Action Together.

Resolved:

That a workshop event be held, involving Members of the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee and of Action Together to discuss and consider engagement approaches across the social support system.

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POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

The Committee considered its Work Programme for 2022/23. It was noted that the agendas for the first part of the municipal year had been relatively light, with several scheduled items/reports being deferred until later in the year. To avoid a backlog of reports developing, making the agendas in the latter part of the municipal year overly long it was suggested that one of the dates set aside for budgetary issues in November 2022 be used as an ordinary meeting of the Committee instead, if necessary.

Resolved:

1. That the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2022/23, be noted.
2. That if necessary and with the agreement of the Chair, one of the dates set aside for budgetary issues in November 2022 be used as an ordinary meeting of the Committee.

11

KEY DECISION NOTICE

The Committee reviewed the Key Decision Notice which provided an opportunity for the identification of items or policy or service development, not otherwise listed on the Committee Work Programme.

Resolved:

That the report and the Key Decision Notice be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.40pm