

POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - OLDHAM
ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK TASK GROUP
18/10/2022 at 4.30 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (in the Chair)
Councillors Barnes, Dean, Harrison, Wilkinson and Williamson

Also in Attendance:
Robbie Cowbury (Positive Steps)
Peter Thompson (Constitutional Services)

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alyas, Nasheen and Clint Phythian.

2 **OLDHAM ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

The Chair 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 and he introduced Robbie Cowbury, who was a Policy Officer for 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 key issues included:

1. The adoption of an Engagement Framework for the whole social support system is made of a Strategic Priority with Executive Sponsorship among the Senior Leadership Team of Oldham Council and responsibility for its

implementation taken up by a partnership board incorporating officers, elected members, residents and community group representatives.

2. That 'Seldom heard' voices, via community groups representing them are actively involved in developing the principles, values and tools underpinning the Framework, so that it is designed from the start to best engage everyone in the Borough.
3. That data protection officers are involved in the process from early in the design to meet any regulatory requirements.
4. That dedicated resource is centrally provided for analysis of insights, translation into decision making spaces and communicating actions taken as a result, as well as investment in a unified platform that all partners would be encouraged to utilise.
5. That assessing the effectiveness of engagement approaches across the social support system is adopted as a priority by the Council's Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was **agreed** that as a way of expediting this matter, the Task Group would discuss engagement approaches across the social support system with the organisers of the Oldham Engagement Framework, Action Together.

3 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was **agreed** that the Task Group next meet on Tuesday, 8th November 2022, starting at 4.30pm in the Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham.

The meeting started at 4.30pm and ended at 5.30pm