



Minutes

UNITY PARTNERSHIP BOARD

2 September 2015

Crompton Suite, Civic Centre, Oldham, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1NL

5.30 pm

Present: Councillors Dean, Jabbar and McCann

Emma Alexander
Fabiola Fuschi
Helen Gerling

Janet Horton
John Sillitoe
Alan Winstanley

Unity Partnership Managing Director
Constitutional Services Officer
Interim Director of Commercial and
Transformational Services, Oldham
Metropolitan Borough Council
Local Public Services Director, Kier
Operations Director, Kier
Interim Unity Partnership
Development Director

1 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Stretton and Sykes, Craig Apsey and Simon Miller.

2 Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the Unity Partnership Board meeting held on 23rd June 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

With regards to the report on the Kier acquisition and its implications, it was noted that the report would be submitted at the next meeting of the Board.

The Board noted that the report on the Kier acquisition and its implications be submitted at the next meeting.

3 Managing Director's Report and KPI Report (Standing Item)

Consideration was given to a report of the Unity Partnership Managing Director which provided a review of the services across the partnership.

Board Members welcome the new format of the report which also contained an executive summary of key areas.

Get Oldham Working

It was reported that 22 apprentices had been employed by Unity in different service areas. The organisation was working positively towards the target of 500 volunteering hours in 2015/16.

Annual Report

A final draft of the report was being reviewed by Council and it will be brought to this Board at the next meeting.

ICT

Some positive changes had been achieved since the service had been delivered by Unity, such as email migration and the possibility to access wider resources and skills within Kier.

Highways

An independent Greater Manchester area value for money review had been carried out. This had confirmed that Oldham Highways Service provided the best value for money within Greater Manchester. Furthermore, the Highways Service customer journey had been analysed and ideas to improve the process would now be implemented. A strategic review of how services were delivered by Unity and Oldham Council would commence soon.

Board Members noted that these positive achievements would need to translate in creating new business for Unity.

Property

The Work Plan for 2015/16 had been completed. Work had already commenced for 2016/17 Work Plan. The system for environmental management had been audited and positive feedback had been received from the auditors, particularly on the part of the system that managed compliance, contractors and the associated Health and Safety / environmental related matters.

Board Members commended the positive results achieved by the service and they thanked the team for their commitment.

Payroll

Some payment issues with Agresso had been resolved in July. The schools self-service portal would be implemented in October. Furthermore, work had started to improve audit assurance regarding delivery of services across Unity.

Revenues and Benefits

Work was in place to deliver an action plan to improve Council Tax collection rate during the next three years. It was explained that performance results were also affected by reporting mechanisms and change in legislation. Improved performance on new benefit claims was noted; however, this indicator was still being closely monitored.

Board Members noted that, in light of the welfare reforms, claimants needed to know their benefit entitlements as soon as possible.



An update on EB1 indicator (time taken to process housing/Council Tax benefit) would be provided as a separate agenda item at the next meeting.

Business Support Services – Business Case Preparation

Further to the update at the last meeting, it was reported that Unity were processing the preparation of a detailed business case for the transfer of the Council Business Support Services (BSS) to Unity. Unity had been working closely with council staff, including Departmental Management Teams, to ensure there was a detailed understanding of the current service.

It was noted that there were some challenges linked to the timelines for approval of the business case which needed to be considered by Unity Partnership Board in advance of approval by Cabinet. The Business Case was scheduled to be considered by the Cabinet on 16th November. The next meeting of the Board was scheduled for 10th November which was too late for the Board to consider the Business Case prior to the agenda being issued for Cabinet. To ensure that Unity Partnership Board could consider the Business Case before the Cabinet agenda was issued, the Board agreed to bring forward the November meeting to allow the business case to follow the internal governance process.

The Board:

- 1. Noted the Managing Director's Report and KPI report.**
- 2. Noted that the Unity Partnership annual report 2014/15 be presented at the next meeting of the Board.**
- 3. Noted that an update on EB1 indicator (time taken to process housing/Council Tax benefit) would be provided as a separate agenda item at the next meeting of the Board.**
- 4. Requested to bring forward the date of the November Board meeting.**

4 Unity Change Programme (Standing Item)

Consideration was given to a report of the Interim Director Commercial and Transformational Services which provided a summary on the progress made, following the restructure of the Unity Partnership, on four key areas that constituted part of the Diamond Change Programme: Efficient Services, Accelerated Transformation, Get Oldham Working and Realignment of the Commercial Terms for the Partnership.

Members were informed that the savings target for 2015/16 was £4.22M and the year to date budget variance was £738,000. However, it was necessary to attend the completion of service reviews to determine whether this difference could be addressed.

The Board noted the Unity Partnership Change Programme Update.

5 Operations Board (Standing Item)

There were no items required this time.

6 AOB

There were no items of any other business.

7 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The date and the time of the next meeting of the Unity Partnership Board would be confirmed as soon as a new date in November is identified.

The meeting started at 5.40 pm and ended at 6.35 pm