Minutes

UNITY PARTNERSHIP BOARD

27 February 2017

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

Present: Councillors Dean, Jabbar, McCann and Ur-Rehman

Emma Alexander	Business Services Director, Kier
Shirley Berry	Head of Sales, Unity Partnership
Helen Gerling	Interim Director, Commercial and Transformational Services
Lori Hughes	Constitutional Services
Ian Meredith	Director - Design and Asset Management, Kier
Simon Miller	Service Delivery Director, Unity Partnership
Pam Siddall	Revenue and Benefits Service Delivery Manager - Unity Partnership
Ray Ward	Executive Director, Corporate and Commercial Services

1   Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stretton and Councillor Sykes.

The Board welcomed Shirley Berry, recently appointed Head of Sales for Unity Partnership and Pam Siddall, Revenue and Benefits Service Delivery Manager.

2   Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the Unity Partnership Board meeting held on 24th November 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

3   Management Update Report (Standing Item)

Consideration was given to a report of the Unity Management Team which provided information on progress made.

Unity reported that they had continued to perform well over the last period.   A number of high profile projects in the Highways Services had been completed. The property team had responded well to the rectification and relocation of the Access

Oldham area. Meetings were due to take place on the 2017/18 Work Programme which faced some challenges. Improvements continued to be made to in-year collection of Council tax which had increased by 0.3% from the same time in the previous year. Unity Payroll had successfully delivered a go-live support plan to the A1 Project. Work continued on the Payroll Improvement Plan. It was also expected that the IT Strategy document would be approved that would lead to the commencement of the technical roadmap delivery.

The following was highlighted by Unity:

Highways

The service continued to be challenged in delivery due the lack of an integrated back office system which was the key element in mitigating risk. Live testing was currently taking place. System implementation was key to delivering savings. Phase Two would look at mobile working.

Property

The performance indicators were on target to be delivered successfully and would be review as part of the Strategic Property Delivery Model. The Council had requested a 2017/18 Work Plan This would impact on service provision and resourcing levels within Property Services. Flexibility for choices would be developed and the work plan included a focus for the strategic property plan.

Revenues

The progress of Council Tax and Business Rate collection for current and former years was the focus of the performance indicators. Performance remained on track. Essential system upgrades were required to Capita systems. The team were focussed on council tax collection and billing for the next financial year. There had been continued improvement in collection rates.

The Board sought and received clarification that the upgrade was essential after which the password refresh would take place.

Benefit Service and Access Oldham

The Housing Benefit Services and Access Oldham performance indicators had been achieved for Quarter 3 despite the relocation of the Access Centre on a temporary basis. EB1 remained on target to attain the annual performance indicator which showed the new approach had been a success. Funding from the Department for Work and Pensions had been reviewed and agreed.

Transactional Finance

All performance indicators were performing well and remained on track for aspirational targets to be achieved.

The Board sought clarification on Unity's relationship with First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO) and recovery action on council tax including the alignment with

recovery action on rent collection. It was explained that Unity worked with FCHO in a number of areas which included regular liaison meetings but it was clarified that this could be explored more sufficiently.

Contact Centre

It was noted that during November and December 2016 the centre had handled 5,235 more waste related enquiries that in 2015/16 following the introduction of the three weekly collection cycles. The additional resources had results in a swift response to calls and emails. The volume of enquiries had a significant impact on the performance of KPI 'K2'.

HR (Advisory and Payroll)

Performance continued to be maintained and information reviewed. A go-live support plan had been delivered to the A1 projects. It was anticipated that by the end of March 2017 further progress would be made with the Service Improvement Plan with the reduction of outstanding items from 36 to 30 and annual updates be undertaken for all systems. The A1 go-live continued to be a risk and a number of configuration builds were to be completed and tested by Unity. Risks and challenges were identified and included the lack of knowledge and continuity, lack of key knowledge on the current council system, year-end updates; commencement of planning for pension returns and MioCare Payroll transfer. Payroll errors were highlighted and a majority were outside Unity's direct control. A proposal was being developed for this information to be included as there were currently no joint performance indicators. The Board were informed that a new Service Delivery Manager had recently been appointed.

Members raised concerns on the MioCare transition and the number of cheques being issued to cover mistakes. It was important that the basic pay system was right. The Board were informed that the Council's version of software out of support. A more up-to-date version was being migrated and a project team were managing the process. The Board were informed that MioCare was not currently self-service but would be moved to a more up-to-date platform. Tests would be done through the process. The MioCare transition would be taking place at the same time as the transition from Vision to Agresso. Risks were being identified and how to mitigate them. It was identified as a Project at Risk. Members requested a separate meeting to discuss issues of the transition for MioCare Staff, the transition from Vision to Agresso and inputs into the system.

IT

All key performance indicators were at aspirational level, customer satisfaction levels were at a record high and the number of call for support continued to fall. The service had also recently passed a licensing compliance audit by Oracle. An IT Strategy document had been developed which would lead to the commencement of the technical road map delivery.

The Board noted activity provided in supporting transformation, Get Oldham Working and Business Development. Unity was on target for utilisation of transformation days

and staff volunteering was also highlighted. The mentoring programme with the University had been well received.

KPI Performance

There were 35 key performance indicator results in total. It was reported that 22% me or exceeded the aspirational threshold, 7 achieved the minor threshold, 2 were below minor levels, 1 reported a nil return and three reported an exemption.

Members commented on the amount of work taken during the relocation of Access Oldham and the positive response from staff. The Board expressed their thanks and appreciation to staff for their performance during the relocation despite the interruption.

Members raised the setting of performance indicators. A separate discussion was needed to review the target and the resources required around council tax. Members raised the caseload of the enforcement team and the resourcing and problems being faced by benefit recipients.

The Board:

1. **Noted the Management Update Report.**
2. **Expressed their thanks to the performance of the Access Staff during the relocation of the service during the remedial works.**
3. **Requested a meeting be arranged to discuss migration of MioCare payroll and other issues.**
4. **Requested a meeting be arranged to discuss council tax collection performance indicators and resourcing of enforcement.**

4   **Highway ICT System project - quarterly update**

The Board were provided with an update on the implementation of the new Highways ICT System. The project was on track to go live in April 2017. The software had been installed and user acceptance testing and user training was currently ongoing. This had been an example of good joint working.

The Board noted the update on the Highways ICT System.

5   **Housing Benefit Position - quarterly update**

The Board gave consideration to a position update on Housing Benefits. Performance as at 9 February 2017 was performing well. It was anticipated that the number of days to process benefits would be 10.2 days by the end of the year. The Board expressed their thanks to staff on the achievement. The performance should be publicised.

The Board:

1. **Noted the update on the Housing Benefit Position.**
2. **Requested that the performance achievement be publicised.**

6   Contract Change Reports (Standing Item)

The Board gave consideration to four Change Control Reports:

- CCR 203: Amendment to Review Service KPI (In Year Council Tax Collection 2015 – 2018);
- CCR205: Amendment to Review KPIs 2 and ET3 2015-16;
- CCR211: Contact Centre Saturday Closure
- CCR222: Highways System

With regard to CCR 203, the change required amendment to Schedule 5 of the Agreement. Oldham Council was currently in the bottom 10 (nationally) in respect of Council Tax collection amongst local authorities in England. The KIP was to be amended in order to drive performance improvement.

With regard to CCR 205, following a joint review the Council and the Partner, final detail and target information for the KPIs had been agreed. The decision followed a focused piece of work carried out by the Revenue Inspection Services Team as part of an internal drive to maximise NNDR revenue. Restrictions to debt collection activity had been lived which allowed related KPI aspirational targets and thresholds to be raised.

With regard to CCR 211, as part of Unity's commitment to continual improvement, an opportunity had been identified to strengthen the customer experience with reutilisation of available resource when demand was at its highest during the week.

With regard to CCR 222, a procurement exercise had been undertaken to find a new software application to meet agreed business requirements.

Applications had been discussed with relevant officers and the Operation Board. Members requested a separate discussion regarding CCR 203.

The Board:

1.   Noted the Contract Change Reports.
2.   Requested separate discussions in relation to CCR 203.

7   AOB

There were no items of any other business.

8   Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Board noted the date and time of the next meeting scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 27th June 2017 at 5.30 p.m.

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and ended at 4.57 pm