

**REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
WEST OLDHAM AREA COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT
2005/2006**

PURPOSE

To report on the work of the West Oldham Area Committee over the last municipal year

BACKGROUND

This report summarises the work of Area Committee during the municipal year 2005-06 under 5 headings:

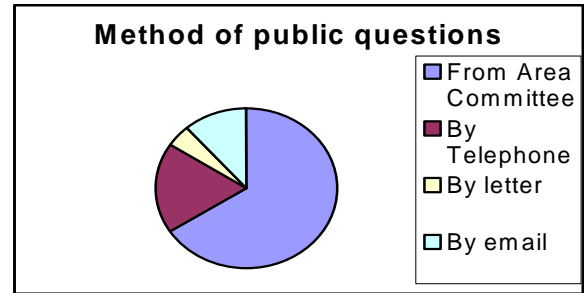
- Public Question Time
- Partnership Working
- Using Area Committee budgets to support the community and voluntary sector and other priorities.
- Key achievements.
- Key issues and further actions required

1.0 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Public question time is usually the half hour allocated at Area Committee, however if needed this allocation is extended to ensure all public questions are heard and answered. The following figures give an idea of the main concerns raised at the Area Committee. Some questions are received before the Area Committee Meeting in writing or over the telephone.

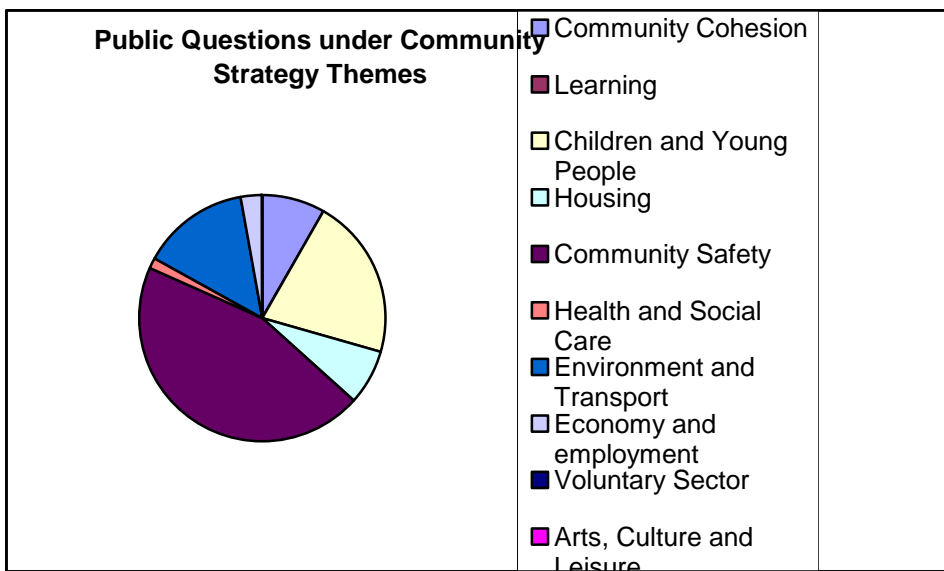
The chart below shows how many public questions were received and by what method

Number of Public Questions received	
From Area Committee	58
By Telephone	16
By letter	4
By email	10
TOTAL	88



The Chart below shows the number of public questions received broken down into the Community Strategy themes.

Community Strategy Theme	Number of questions received
Community Cohesion	6
Learning	0
Children and Young People	15
Housing	5
Community Safety	32
Health and Social Care	1
Environment and Transport	10
Economy and employment	2
Voluntary Sector	0
Arts, Culture and Leisure	0
Miscellaneous	17
TOTAL	88



As can be seen from the first pie chart, most public questions are received at the Area Committee, although a few are put forward by other means. As the second pie chart shows, by far the greatest percentage of questions concerned Community Safety. This is largely due to the Police representation at all Committee meetings to take up public queries and questions

There were also a number of questions regarding children and young people, which is obviously a priority for West Oldham.

2.0 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

2.1 Neighbourhood Solutions

The Area Committee has been a major partner in the establishment of Neighbourhood Solutions over the past year. An Area Action Team (AAT) has been established for West Oldham, which brings together key agencies such as the Police, Community Safety, FCHO, and youth providers to work together to solve issues in hotspot locations. To ensure that the residents of West Oldham have an opportunity to feed into the work of the AAT, 9 Multi Agencies Partnerships (MAPs) have been established. The MAPs have been well supported by members of the Area Committee, and they have been an effective way of gathering community intelligence and support. The Committee have the opportunity to influence the work of the Area Action Team and provide a scrutiny role in monitoring the effectiveness of Partnership Working.

The AAT through MAPs has worked in the hotspot locations of Primrose Bank, Bardsley and Fitton Hill, Holts Estate and Coppice (burglaries).

3.0 USING THE AREA COMMITTEE BUDGETS TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND OTHER PRIORITIES

The information below is a summary of how Area Committee Budgets have been used. The summary confirms that most projects have a strong community cohesion theme. There are also clear links between the projects and the Area Committee priorities and Corporate Plan themes.

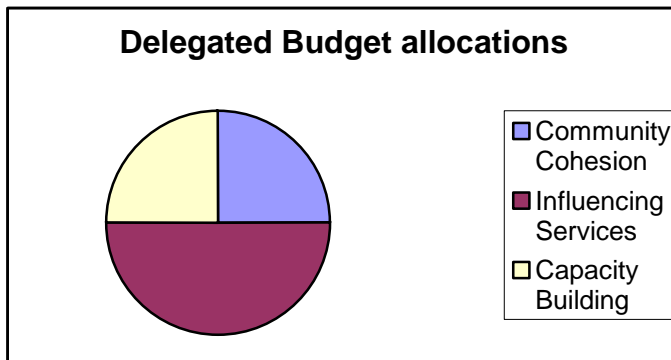
The Area Committee has awarded a total of 16 grants, amounting to £26,700 (See Appendix 1) from the Delegated Budget and Minor Grants - grants which are applied for directly by community groups and agencies to influencing Services - this category enables the Area Committee to add value to the work of key services working in the West Oldham Area.

Project	£
Neighbourhood Solutions/MAPs Support Officer	6,000

Greenhill football Club	2,000
Oldham Volleyball Club	511
Dnipro Choir Group	1,869
Glodwick Cricket Club	2,500
Groundwork – Plum Street project	1000
Clarkwell Area Play Area	3,000
Env. Services	800
St. Hugh's School	2,000
9 th Oldham Scout Club	976
Vision youth Project	1,800
OREP	333
Holts Social group/life long Learning Unit	1,176
S.S. Temple	1,460
Borough Games	500
Werneth Park Veterans Bowling Club	775
Total	26,700

The chart below shows the % of funding earmarked for each priority during the year. The chart indicates that a large percentage of the Area Committee funding has been spent on young people activities.

Area Committee Priorities	Funding Allocated %
Community Cohesion	25
Influencing Services	50
Capacity Building	25



4.0 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Multi Agencies Partnerships (MAPs)

On the success of Alt and Roundthorn MAP, 8 other MAPs have been established in the area. MAPs are a success as more issues are discussed at neighbourhood level and solutions developed. MAPs were launched in all for Wards and those were successful too.

Under Safer Neighbourhoods initiative, the Police and local community representatives carried out household surveys in all 9 MAP neighbourhoods. A total of 1048 questionnaires were filled in and data analysed. Following this, draft Action Plans for each MAP were discussed with MAP partners and presented to a public meeting organised for each MAP for general consensus. There are 9 Action Plans to work from, which if collated can provide Ward and West Oldham level Action Plans.

MAPs have brought in all local agencies, residents & tenants representatives and elected members to address issues and local concerns. Major achievements through MAPs, worth mentioning are:

- Development of Holts EMB Social Group which actively carries out activities for local community;
- Enrolment of over 400 key individuals as members of Key Individual Network (KIN) co-ordinated by the Police;
- Dealing with underage drinking and youth nuisance in Bardsley;
- Detached and regular youth sessions in Alt and Roundthorn;
- Dealing with youth nuisance and reducing burglaries on Primrose Bank estate;
- Additional freestanding litter bins in Coldhurst; increasing confidence in HMR programme in Freehold;
- Clean up campaigns in Coldhurst ward
- Influencing work of NDC in Hathershaw

During the year, £56,000 of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding was received to address issues raised at the MAPs. This has funded the following projects:

Cost Item	£
Micro Mark cameras	3,000.00
Improved play ground and new Goal Posts	5,000.00
Dome Cameras for Fitton Hill and Holts	10,178.00
Home telephones for HMR residents	1,057.50
Ernitec Armoured Dome Cameras for victims of harassment	902.50
Litter Bins in Coldhurst	5625

Marlane Fold Lane – improving route to school to adaptable standards	30,337.00

For some the above schemes extra funding was secured from the Police (£5,000), Community Safety Unit (£8,000) and Environmental Services (£20,000). Airport dividend was also received to fund CCTV Dome Cameras and a kick about area for Holts Village, and new fencing for the bottom end of Merton Fields previously located in Werneth ward.

Youth Sub Group

A Youth Sub Group established last year, continues to meet regularly. More youths are participating in decision-making. The sub group is to give the young people of the area an opportunity to express their views and have them heard by local decision makers. It also makes it easier to engage the young people of the area on a variety of issues.

Co-optees' Training

During the last year's training/information giving sessions, Co-opted members had identified a few topics for future sessions. Three sessions as planned previously were held during '05-'06 year. The key session was on introducing and explaining the activities of Council Departments viz. Environmental Services, Regeneration and Chief Executive's Department. Another session explained the proposed changes in the Social Services Department detailing out the new Children's Services. The purpose, structure, operation and achievements of the Oldham Partnership were also explained during the second session. Finally at the participants' request, the new Local Area Agreements and Localism initiatives were explained in the third session.

Attendance at the above sessions has varied. Around 20-25 members have participated at each session. To increase attendance as well as making sure that such informative/training sessions are available, the new recruitment pack for year '06-'07 will emphasise that all co-opted members must attend at least 2 out of 3 sessions.

HMRF Programme

The Area Committee addressed several issues raised by local Werneth and Freehold HMRF residents. The Committee was influential in making changes to the final plans prepared by the consultants.

The Neighbourhood Works

"The Neighbourhood Works" is an ODPM funded programme for Elected Members, officers and partner agencies designed to develop understanding and skills so that we can deliver better co-ordinated services at a neighbourhood level. The programme includes sessions that will enable Members and officers to work with colleagues from Salford to share good practice.

The programme had two launch events, one in each Council area, to outline the programme. Some key elements of the programme are;

- Explore the issues emerging for the Councils and partner agencies, within the context of the Government's agenda for stronger, safer and more cohesive communities.
- Empower participants to look critically at what they do and how they can influence delivery within existing structures using good practice from around the UK.
- Learning how to engage local residents to shape their area and have a say on service delivery.

After initial comments from participants there has been some adjustment to the programme. The sessions for Module C, which is specifically for Elected Members, were postponed due to low take up and an alternative delivery method is being investigated.

Mediation Northern Ireland

Three Area Managers have participated in the Mediation Northern Ireland programme. Along with other partner representatives, they participated in a four-day training session in Belfast and six further sessions in Oldham. Alongside the training programme the participants have worked on two Building Good Relations case studies in Glodwick and Royton. In completing the course, participants have gained practical experience in resolving conflict by using mediation techniques.

5.0 FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Neighbourhood Solutions

During 2006/07, an Improvement Plan will be developed to help build upon the work of the Area Action Teams. There will be a particular focus upon ensuring that the Borough can meet its key priorities in the Local Area Agreement on crime, the quality of the environment, engagement of local people in influencing decision making and a general increase in public satisfaction about the neighbourhoods within which they live. An essential part of the Improvement Plan will therefore be to improve the opportunities for local people to get involved. A consultation about how we might better engage local people in influencing the services delivered in their neighbourhood will be launched shortly with a view to implementing any changes by January 2007.

5.2 Local Area Agreement

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is an initiative that will give Oldham the opportunity to accelerate the pace of change and will be the strategic tool for improving partnership working. The LAA will act as the catalyst for driving forward more effective, co-ordinated and streamlined joint agency working to deliver improved services for the benefit of residents.

The Oldham Partnership is currently streamlining its structures as a result of the Local Area Agreement and re-organising internally by amalgamating its current nine thematic partnerships in to five Partnership Boards or 'Blocks'.

Each Block will have identified outcomes, indicators and targets to achieve the strategic priorities and promote stronger community cohesion.

5.3 Co-optees' Development

It will be important to further develop Co-opted Members through continued training programmes so that they have the capacity to play an active role on the Committee. They will need the skills to contribute to the increasing role the Committee will play in local decision making. To increase attendance at Area Committee meetings and making sure that training sessions are attended, there is a new recruitment pack for year 2006-7 which will emphasise that all co-opted members must attend at least 2 out of 3 training sessions and be active in at least one of the Area Committee sub-groups.

5.4 Marketing of the Area Committees

Although the Area Committees now feature on the Council website there is a need to further improve the way Area Committee meetings and their work is promoted. The Area Chairs have approved a marketing and communications strategy that will be implemented during 2006-7.

West Oldham's partners will be producing a quarterly newsletter during 2006-7 to inform residents of the work of the Area Committee, Area Action Team and local MAPs

5.5 Youth Provision

The Youth Sub-group will be tasked with mapping activities in the West Oldham area and identifying gaps in provision. The young people in the sub-group will begin to write their own reports for the Area Committee meetings and will be making recommendations on the contents of the Children's and Young Peoples section of the area action plan.

5.6 Area Action Plan

To monitor Area Action Plans at MAP and area level by MAPs and the Area Action Team

5.7 Neighbourhood Works Programme

Oldham Council, in conjunction with Salford City Council, have introduced an ambitious programme to develop comprehensive neighbourhood management. Both authorities have recognised that one of the keys to the delivery of services that respond to the needs of citizens (as expressed at a local level), is recognising the impact it has on all aspects of the way the Council operates.

'Partners in Change' will provide a training programme and it is expected that 100 Council managers and up to 50 managers from partner agencies will participate in the programme.

6.0 Mediation Northern Ireland

Three Area Managers have participated in the Mediation Northern Ireland programme along with other partner representatives; they participated in a four-day training session in Belfast and six further sessions in Oldham. In completing the course, participants have gained practical experience in resolving conflict by using mediation techniques that will be available for any area in the Borough.

7.0 Events

The Area Committee will be leading on this year's lights switch on in town centre to celebrate Eid and Diwali festivals.

Under Safer Neighbourhoods and MAPs, public meetings will be held each quarter in each Ward. These meetings will also have display stalls and stands from all agencies working in each Ward.

Several borough wide events take place Alexandra Park which is a key feature in the Area.