

PRESENT

Members of the Committee

Councillor Gerard Hargreaves (Chairman)
Councillor Elizabeth Campbell
Councillor Mary Weale
Councillor Monica Press

Voluntary Organisation Representatives in Attendance

Angela Spence	(Kensington and Chelsea Social Council)
Clare Richards	(Education)
Jane Gray	(Advice)
Jamie Renton	(Equality and Inclusivity)
Helen Leech	(Health and Wellbeing)
Vicki Davies	(Community Centre)
Charles Barber	(Citizens Advice)
Luliana Dinu	(Volunteer Centre Kensington and Chelsea)
Jamie Renton	(Equality and Inclusivity)

Also in Attendance

Councillor Robert Freeman
Melanie Marshman (RBKC, Head of Community Engagement)
Tony Redpath (RBKC, Director of Strategy and Local Services)
Helen Fagan (RBKC, Third Sector Development Officer)
Amina Khatun (Kensington and Chelsea Social Council)

Minutes

Shai Richardson RBKC, Community and Third Sector Support Officer)

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, AND INTRODUCTIONS

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Coleridge, Mary Mulcahy, Val Patterson and Andrew Croxford.
- 1.2 Councillor Hargreaves welcomed Councillor Freeman to the meeting.
- 1.3 Luliana Dinu, Andrew Croxford's replacement for this meeting, introduced herself to the group as the Head of Health and Wellbeing for The Volunteer Centre.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 February 2016

- 3.1 Angela Spence asked that it be noted that Laurence Wilson attended the meeting in place of Charles Barber. With this amendment the minutes of the previous meeting 24 February were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 3.2 Councillor Hargreaves briefly mentioned the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme, the first family had been delayed on a few occasions due to outgoing flight restrictions imposed in Turkey. However, the family have now settled in the borough.
- 3.3 Councillor Hargreaves discussed the Council Matters item from the previous meeting, Melanie Marshman confirmed that the Local Health Watch (LHW) now had a new Director in place. Angela Spence said she will be meeting with them next week.

4. REVIEW OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

(Report by the Head of Community Engagement, Melanie Marshman and the minutes of that meeting attached)

- 4.1 Melanie Marshman introduced the item about the AGM held in June. The key areas discussed during the AGM were the Councils approach to commissioning, a Voluntary and Community Sector that is fit for purpose, and food poverty and the Voluntary Sector's response. Melanie Marshman also noted the Leader's suggestion that Voluntary Sector groups could benefit from a yearly event to showcase their work.
- 4.2 The minutes taken from the June AGM were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 4.3 Melanie Marshman asked for feedback on the AGM, and Councillor Hargreaves encouraged the group to share their views on the format of the meeting.
- 4.4 Angela Spence suggested a change in approach to the meetings and made comparisons to the previous year's AGM which included a speed dating segment. This type of interaction proved successful as communication was maximised and this approach also added an element of fun. This could be implemented again.
- 4.5 Angela Spence stated that the Q&A session should be rethought, though these conversations had been valued, it was agreed that this could be done differently to the current panel/audience style. Angela Spence also suggested implementing showcases, giving representatives an opportunity to give a practical example of what they are doing well.
- 4.6 Clare Richards said she believed the turnout to be good, but smaller tables could prove less intimidating to some. The group also discussed the possibility of the event occurring in the afternoon to encourage more people to attend.
- 4.7 Angela Spence noted the difficulty of obtaining a suitable keynote speaker for these meetings to discuss relevant topics. Angela suggested that a 'world café' style format could be considered for the next meeting.
- 4.8 Councillor Press suggested a facilitator be used to ensure tables are mixed equally between Voluntary Sector representatives and Councillors. Councillor Press also suggested having more of a focus on smaller organisations as their experiences managing and utilising smaller pots of funding could be an interesting point of discussion and source of knowledge for the group.

- 4.9 It was suggested that a small working group be convened to develop ideas for next year's event. Those volunteering to join Melanie and Angela should contact Melanie Marshman.

ACTION: BVOAG members who wish to be involved in planning the 2017 AGM to contact Melanie Marshman.

- 4.10 The group were asked to suggest areas that the BVOAG meetings could focus on in the coming 12 months. Tony Redpath discussed the RBKC Staff Volunteering Policy which gives fulltime employees of RBKC an opportunity to volunteer with organisations in the borough for two days a year. Tony said he doesn't believe the scheme has yet reached its full potential. Tony welcomed feedback and suggestions from voluntary groups on how to improve results, stating that RBKC were keen to make the programme a success.
- 4.11 Luliana Dinu mentioned the volunteering fair which was held at the Town Hall. Although the initial buzz of interest and turnout was encouraging, the level of interest did not develop into results afterwards.
- 4.12 Angela Spence stated that this was discussed at their main voluntary organisation forum in June and members suggested that staff interests and voluntary sector opportunities could be matched through using an online portal to facilitate the process.
- 4.13 Councillor Press suggested property and location, including some information on where the services are in the Council and Voluntary Sector and also some information on where the Canalside House tenant's will be moved. Melanie Marshman stated that the Property Department were in the process of mapping locations of organisations. This analysis could be presented at a future meeting.
- 4.14 Angela Spence said it would be useful to look at the Sustainable Transformation Plan and its impact on the local voluntary and community sector. Tony Redpath said it was quite complex due to multiple stakeholders involved however this did not diminish its importance Tony suggested that the Social Council would be best placed to offer a view on the impact of the STP on the sector.
- 4.16 Angela Spence suggested exploring how the Council and the Voluntary Sector could work together to lever in funding from other sources. Tony Redpath responded by stating Lucy Ashdown could be made available to discuss this with Voluntary Sector reps.

5. BREXIT AND THE POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR (Presentation by the Third Sector Development Officer)

- 5.1 Helen Fagan introduced the Brexit discussions with a presentation. Helen said at this point it was still too early to say how the Voluntary Sector and Council will be affected by the Brexit decision.
- 5.2 The Government has confirmed multi-year European funded projects that were agreed before the 2016 Autumn statement will continue for their full term. The security of replacement funding streams for future years is still to be reviewed.
- 5.3 VAT and specifically the VAT relief that charities currently receive could be affected.

- 5.4 The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has provided a list of actions it recommends charities undertake to be prepared for changes as a result of Brexit.
- 5.5 'Engaging your communities' features as one of these recommendations, in light of the increase in Hate Crime that has been reported across the UK. Tony Redpath confirmed that there had also been a spike in incidents in Kensington and Chelsea as statistics from the Community Safety Team have confirmed.
- 5.6 Councillor Hargreaves summarised the discussions, stating the group will need to keep abreast of any changes, and handle them in a measured way.

6. KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA POVERTY AND INEQUALITY NETWORK – FOODBANKS IN THE BOROUGH (Presentation by Kensington and Chelsea Social Council)

- 6.1 Angela Spence introduced Amina Khatun from KCSC who would begin a presentation on the Food for Thought project that ends this Autumn. Angela Spence wished to extend her thanks to City Living, Local Life for their contribution of funding to employ an intern to work on the project.
- 6.2 Amina Khatun shared stark statistics on food poverty stating that in 2015-16 1,047 three-day emergency supplies had been distributed, this was an increase on the 992 provided in the previous year. In 2015-16, 819 of these supplies were for adults and 255 for children. The most common reasons for needing emergency supplies were as follows: 27 per cent were due to benefit delays, 21 per cent due to low income and 11 per cent due to benefit changes.
- 6.3 The aims of the Food for Thought project are: to find the causes of food poverty in the borough; understand the Voluntary and Community Sector's response to the issue of food poverty; inform the sector on the locations of food banks in the borough; enable the voice of local food banks to tackle food poverty; provide a digital map of all food aid provided in the borough and focus on the referral process.
- 6.4 Amina presented a brief summary of the project's findings, Amina pointed out that the report is yet to be published. The report stated that those affected by food poverty were both in and out of work. The report mentioned hidden poverty, stating that poverty is not as visible as many may believe it to be, due to the shame that can be associated with it.
- 6.5 Amina also mentioned that most food banks rely on referrals which can cause issues. There are reports of older people being malnourished and food poverty disproportionately affecting certain disadvantaged people more such as migrants. Some food available is not suitable, good quality or culturally appropriate.
- 6.6 Vicki Davies gave some background on the food bank run by the Dalgarno Trust. Councillor Hargreaves mentioned his recent visit to Dalgarno Trust and commented on how impressed he was with the service and number of visits. Councillor Hargreaves also praised the response of the Voluntary Sector to food poverty.

7. DEMAND FOR SPECIALIST HOUSING ADVICE

- 7.1 Charles presented the findings of a survey conducted about the volume of housing advice enquiries made to Age UK, WENAC and CAB showing that there was a rise in the demand for housing advice for these voluntary organisations since the service had been decommissioned.
- 7.2 Charles Barber said he would like Housing to share the findings of their research which was undertaken with advice providers prior to the service being decommissioned. Tony Redpath said that he could see no reason why Housing could not share their findings and committed to follow this up. Councillor Hargreaves suggested a member of the Voluntary Organisations take a lead on taking this forward in Charles' absence, the group agreed Baljit from Nucleus would be the best fit.

ACTION: Tony Redpath to speak with the Housing Department about the possibility of sharing the report with CAB.

8. VOLUNTARY SECTOR MATTERS

(Report of the Chief Executive Officer of the Kensington and Chelsea Social Council)

- 8.1 Angela Spence began the report by thanking the Council for the on-going commitment to fund the voluntary sector through the new round of Corporate grants. She asked RBKC representatives if they would be able to provide some clarity on what they would like to see as an outcome of the Corporate Grants for 2017-19.
- 8.2 Councillor Hargreaves said the two-year funding is to help organisations with their medium term future and security of funding. Organisations can explore new sources of funding in the mean-time.
- 8.3 Angela Spence said how much the BVOAG was valued by the voluntary Sector and stated that the recent decision to change from five meetings per year to four was supported by the Voluntary Sector representative.
- 8.4 Angela Spence wished to query whether there was any truth to the speculation that LBHF no longer wished to develop any more shared services with RBKC. Angela said she would like to hear RBKCs views on the stability of shared services.
- 8.5 In response to Angela, Councillor Weale stated it is LBHF's prerogative to stop creating shared services, RBKC will continue to work hard to deliver the shared services that are already in place. Councillor Campbell agreed that shared services has worked very well but that it was currently very challenging despite good relationships with their counterparts in LBHF.
- 8.6 Angela Spence asked about the future on Voluntary Sector spending, whilst commissioning arrangements are being extended, the Voluntary Sector remain conscious of having not heard anything significant on the future plans of funding. Councillor Hargreaves noted Angela's concern. Councillor Campbell committed to feed this back to officers.
- 8.7 The group discussed the proposal to establish a Kensington and Chelsea Young People's Foundation. Councillor Campbell stated the name of the organisation is too similar to The Kensington and Chelsea Foundation and this could potentially cause problems with funding and signposting situations as they could be confused with one another.

- 8.8 Angela Spence said John Lyons is keen to establish Youth Foundations across eight different boroughs. However, conversations are still to be had, and this would be the time to voice opinions directly to them.
- 8.9 Tony Redpath said the Council was disappointed with John Lyon's approach, as any organisation wishing to form in Kensington and Chelsea should see what is happening already in the borough as a first step. There was a concern that their approach of trying to establish a Youth Foundation would be harmful to the existing Kensington and Chelsea Foundation.

9. COUNCIL GENERAL MATTERS

- 9.1 Clare Richards expressed her dissatisfaction with her experience of the Councils DRR process. Melanie Marshman stated the process had been reviewed and there should not be a repeat of this in the future.

10. ANY OTHER ORAL OR WRITTEN ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

- 10.1 Councillor Hargreaves wished to note Vicki Davies and Charles Barber's impending retirement and express his gratitude for their wisdom and work ethic over the past years. Vicki and Charles were presented with gifts from members of the advisory group.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND PROPOSED DATES FOR 2017

- 11.1 The next meeting will be on 15 December.
- 11.2 The dates for meetings in 2017 will be proposed in December.

Meeting ended 20:00