



Agenda



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Wednesday 7 November 2012

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5th Floor, Forest House,
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12.30pm: Lunch and light refreshments,
Agenda starts at 1pm and finishes at 2.30pm

1. Introduction and apologies
2. Minutes of last meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Feedback from Voluntary Sector Representatives
5. Local Policing Model
DCI Stewart Hill, Metropolitan Police
6. Victim Support's Services
Sheelagh Jarrett and Kate McCabe
7. Raising crime and community safety issues through the voluntary and community sector
Liz Pearce
8. Future meetings of the Network
Have your say on topics to be discussed at future meetings
9. Any Other Business
10. Next meeting of the Network
Wednesday 5 December 2012

Minutes

Redbridge CVS Network Meeting 3rd October 2012

1. Present

- Frank Spring – Friends of Dunelm
- Angela Banner – Redbridge Pensioners' Forum
- Alan Banner – Redbridge Pensioners Forum
- Kate Marrioon – Run-up
- Anne Garrard – Disability Redbridge
- Susan Pick – Redbridge Pensioners' Forum
- Betty Innes – Redbridge Pensioners' Forum
- Nicholas Hurst – Frenford Clubs
- T. Noble – Studio 3 Arts
- V. Hunt – Redbridge Voluntary Care
- Jagdev Purewal – Panjabi Centre
- Natalie Szarek – Forest Farm Peace Garden
- Jon Abrams – Redbridge Concern for Mental Health
- Jacquie Greave – Redbride Faith Forum
- Sonia Lynch – HLP Welcome Project
- John Browne – Scout Fellowship
- Avril Browne – Redbridge Standing Conference of Women's Organisations
- Kevin Page – Redbridge Residents Network
- S.H. Granditer
- Cllr Keith Prince – London Borough of Redbridge
- Cllr Ian Bond – London Borough of Redbridge
- Ross Diamond – RedbridgeCVS
- Liz Pearce – RedbridgeCVS
- Harjit Sangha – RedbridgeCVS
- Colin Wilson – RedbridgeCVS (Chair)
- Karolina Dylewska – RedbridgeCVS (Minutes)
- Liz Walker - RedbridgeCVS

2. Introduction and apologies

Colin Wilson, Chair, welcomed everyone and explained the main purpose of the meeting. He also welcomed and introduced the guest speakers.

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Chris Wyatt – Redbridge Music Lounge
- Jon Pushkin – Redbridge Music Lounge
- Chris Wilson – Redbridge Pensioners' Forum
- Phil Herbert – Welcome Centre

3. Presentation: Introduction to the Corporate Strategy

Cllr Keith Prince – Leader of the Council
Cllr Ian Bond – Deputy Leader of the Council

The Councillors introduced the Council's new draft Corporate Strategy document. Cllr Prince said that in the past such strategies had been prepared by Council officers and then

accepted by politicians. This time it was the Cabinet that put the strategy together, and this is a better way of reflecting the values, views and needs of those living and working in the borough. The Strategy is now being consulted on and will change between now and its final publication in December. It covers the period from now until 2014.

The Strategy has eight priorities: Safer Communities, Enhancing the Environment, Improving Health and Wellbeing, Economic Growth, Enabling Independent Living, Education Excellence, Supporting Young People and Efficiency and Transparency.

The document is to be published as an e-document, available mostly online (although some hard copies will be available if requested).

The Council already works closely with other services, but in addition, it will take on responsibility for the Public Health Department from next April. The Strategy is a Council-only document, but does talk about the importance of working in partnership with the voluntary sector and others including the NHS, police and neighbouring councils. The Council recognises the voluntary sector's role and the importance of it. This is why it is so important for the Council to listen to the views of voluntary sector organisations.

Questions and answers

- Q. Jon Abrams:** Responding to various consultations takes time. Is LBR going to address the responses in detail and explain how they have influenced the final document? This is important in itself, but also because voluntary groups in receipt of LBR Strategic Partners' Grants are required to demonstrate how we have we influenced policies.
- A. Cllr Prince:** Depending on the amount of responses to the consultation it may not be practical for Council to go to the expense of responding to each individual person. However, it is a fair point and something to take on board and look into. As for the monitoring – the submission of a response to a consultation is sufficient evidence to prove that you are trying to influence policies.
- A. Cllr Bond:** It takes a lot of time to create policy documents with all the appendices, etc, to consult on, but this can become a "tick-box exercise" to show that consultation has been done. As this document is shorter than many consultation documents, it should be easier to see the changes that are made following responses.
- Jon then commented that the Redbridge Corporate Strategy document is in an accessible format and is easy to read.
- Q. Ross Diamond:** How does this Strategy relate to the previous Sustainable Communities Strategy which was a joint document of the RSP and which focused on partnership work?
- A. Cllr Prince:** That document is still 'live'.
- A. Cllr Bond:** This document is a Council-only strategy and does not replace the other document.

- Q. Angela Banner:** Related to page 4 of the document – Safer Communities – could more details be given on anti-social behaviour teams?
- A. Cllr Prince:** The main idea is to invest more resources in the team so they can cover more hours, especially at the weekends; another idea is for anti-social behaviour surgeries where people can come and discuss the issues they are facing with local councillors and the police.
- Q. Kevin Page:** The document does not seem to have anything about promoting community development and community facilities. Also, the issue of the accountability of some of the Council officers was raised: a complaint was made and the person responsible failed to mention that they would not be in post after they had responded – meaning that nobody was responsible.
- A. Cllr Prince:** In relation to the complaint that must have been an individual issue; there is someone else in the post referred to, and they have taken on all their predecessor's responsibilities. In relation to community facilities, the LBR Community Fund recently gave £40k to help open up a community centre in Green Lane; and have recently also opened a new library in Seven Kings.
- A. Cllr Bond:** Community facilities are very important and we need to make sure that local communities benefit from those investments.
- Q. Liz Pearce:** Cllr Bond said it was important for other sectors and not just the Council to do things. Could you expand on how you would engage working with the voluntary sector? Second part of the question is in relation to the ethnicity and age breakdown – clearly the demographics of the borough are changing; has this been addressed and taken into account when setting up priorities?
- A. Cllr Bond:** We started the process of creating the strategy by looking at the changes in demographics and taking those into account while bringing the structure together.
- A. Cllr Prince:** The current strategy is a short term strategy and we do not predict massive change within next 18 months, but 2020 vision which is more of a long term strategy is going to be widely influenced by that.
- A. Cllr Bond:** We recognise the importance of volunteering and the sector; we are working on volunteering strategies and how to use volunteers;
- Q.** How are you going to involve the voluntary sector in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy work? Is the funding going to be enough for the new NHS? Is the Council trying to save A&E at King George's?
- A. Cllr Prince:** The Council is trying to do all it can in order to save A&E, but the decision does not lie within the Council's power. Last week there was a suggestion that there is going to be a national review of A&E closures. In relation to Health and Wellbeing – we set up Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board with a range of different partners on it. We will not get enough funding mainly because its allocation has been based on a historic spend, and not on current needs.
- Q. Ann Garrard:** The Health and Wellbeing strategy says a lot about young people being looked after. What about older people, those with disabilities and those in difficult economic situations? Is anyone looking into the impact those changes will have on them and their health and wellbeing?
- A. Cllr Bond:** The changes into all benefits are a big issue. The changes to Council Tax Benefit are happening from next April and we are doing our best to try to work out what the impact of those might be. We are making some provisions in order to deal with any serious difficulties caused by the changes, but the amount of money is not that big to try to prepare for the changes that are coming. There are also a lot of organisational changes coming.
- A. Cllr Prince:** Some services are being decentralised while the others are being centralised. The Council Tax benefit is coming back to local councils, and in theory the business rates are coming back as well.
- Q. Angela Banner:** Can visitors attend Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board meetings?
- A. Cllr Prince:** Yes. The next meeting takes place on October 25th at 2pm in the Council Chamber. You can just come along.
- Q. Frank Spring:** Is the voice of those from minorities being heard? It is hard to get people with learning disabilities to speak up. Very often important matters require them to use the Council website, etc, but a lot of people with learning disabilities cannot do that.
- A. Cllr Prince:** I strongly disagree with the statement that people with learning disabilities very often cannot access the Internet. In addition to that, the government is looking into doing a pilot project in Redbridge around this issue. Clearly it is a challenge for those from care homes, etc. We have to look at what the voluntary sector and the community could do and organise for that group.
- A. Cllr Bond:** We do realise that communities like that are very hard to reach. We spend more money now on learning disabilities than we did two years ago. The Council is actually investing in that area.
- Q. Frank Spring:** With the number of schools and care homes you have closed down and jobs you cut the Council must have saved a lot of money. What is happening with that money?
- A. Cllr Bond:** In terms of direct care packages we are spending a lot more.
- A. Cllr Prince:** The population of the borough is getting older. We have more and more people with learning difficulties and that increases pressure in those areas. Even though the cuts have been made, we have to provide a lot more services in those areas.
- Q. S.H. Granditer:** Do you agree that sentencing should be tougher for criminals?
- A. Cllr Prince:** This isn't a Council area, but personally I agree that sentencing should be heavier in some cases.
- Q. Natalie Szarek:** You have mentioned a lot about working with the voluntary sector. However the sector is facing a huge financial squeeze from the Council. How are you looking into implementing your theme about working in partnership?
- A. Cllr Prince:** There has been a reduction in the Council's funding from the government. However, we have created a Community Fund (£200k earlier this year and another £200k now). We are going to review how to improve that cooperation and find ways to engage. But the voluntary sector will need to come and demonstrate that what they do is adding value. For example, a couple of weeks ago a voluntary organisation approached us. Their central funding is finishing and we found some extra money, probably around £75k, in order to put the tender out for that voluntary position to actually be funded. If voluntary

organisations come and demonstrate this, and we see the benefit from that organisation, we will try to find the money.

A. Cllr Bond: We all understand the importance of the voluntary sector. That is why sessions like this are so important, so we can hear the views.

Q. Kevin Page: A lift was installed at Chadwell Heath station for use by those with disabilities, but it is closed if the ticket office is closed. Could the Council suggest alternatives?

A. Cllr Prince: This is something that we will take away and look at closely.

Q. Jon Abrams: A lot of organisations have had their funding cut significantly. The Community Fund is not new money. Maybe a piece of work should be done on what the actual spending on the voluntary sector is?

A. Cllr Prince: Historically we used to get funding from government for certain initiatives and we passed it on. The Council does not get that funding anymore, so there is nothing to pass on, but we are trying to help local organisations.

Q. Alan Banner: What is the Council planning to safeguard the Kenneth More Theatre? And is anything being done to improve the area where the bus stops are and where it can get really unpleasant? The Theatre has got brilliant transport links and is in the Town Centre.

A. Cllr Prince: The theatre it is not in a perfect location. There are parking issues, rowdy youngsters going clubbing, etc. We would like to see a bigger theatre. The current building is too small for any big productions. It has been designed more for amateur productions and we should aspire for something much better. Is it very frustrating and depressing that the arts organisations in Redbridge do not work together and aspire to get a better and bigger theatre.

Nicolas Hurst said there would be a problem if the Kenneth More Theatre were knocked down and there was a gap while waiting for the new one to be built. A new building should be completed so the Theatre could move before the old building was closed. Cllr Prince agreed.

Q. If the new theatre is going to be built are the prices going to be affordable?

A. Cllr Prince: At the moment we can only put on a limited choice of productions; if we had a bigger theatre, we could put on bigger productions and attract a wider variety of audiences. The biggest risk is to keep the theatre as it is now and for it to fail to be financial sustainable and for Redbridge be left with no theatre or large arts venue.

Colin Wilson thanked the Councillors for spending so much time with us and for answering all the questions so fully.

Gathering responses: an exercise to let you have your say about the different elements of the strategy

Ross distributed 'Post-it' notes and asked everyone present to contribute any comments and suggestions on the Council's Corporate Strategy on the specially prepared sheets on the walls around the room. All of the comments would be collated and sent to the Council.

4. Reports back from meetings with public bodies; minutes of previous meetings

Ross Diamond reminded the meeting that anyone who represents the voluntary sector on any meetings can use the

Network as a way of seeking views and reporting back on the impact of meetings. He gave the following updates:

Public and Voluntary Sectors' Partnership

The voluntary sector representatives were elected and their details were in the last "Community" newsletter and on RedbridgeCVS's website. They can be contacted by groups wishing to raise issues of concern with the Council. Ross said there had been a useful 'away day' session that had set the agenda for the year ahead, which included looking at commissioning, volunteering and the Compact etc.

Redbridge Strategic Partnership

The partnership is currently under review; the Voluntary Sector part of the RSP is called the Assembly and it is keen to continue meeting. There is a strong view among the Assembly members that the work the Strategic Partnership does is useful and important and should continue. The last Assembly meeting agreed to request an extension to the Community Fund deadline as it was a short timescale and groups need to identify match funding for their bids. This had been swiftly agreed by LBR.

Community Cohesion Working Group

This is now reviewing its Action Plan, with a view to ensuring it has had impact before starting a revised Strategy and Action Plan.

Big Society Working Group

This time-limited group was hoping to continue in some form, as a lot of relevant legislation (including aspects of the Localism Act) was now coming into force.

Ross reported that all these meetings take place regularly so if you there are any comments or issues to be raised he will be happy to do so.

5. Minutes of the last two meetings

The minutes from the last two meetings were agreed as a true record, with no further matters arising.

6. AOB

- Redbridge CVS AGM takes place on 17 October – everyone is welcome!
- The Mayor's Awards are now open for nominations. Information is available from the Town Hall, or on Redbridge-i and the RedbridgeCVS website.
- A second "Giving Time for Others" event sponsored by the Mayor of Redbridge is to take place on 13 December; some stalls are still available. Please contact Liz Pearce for more details.

7. Details of the Next Meeting

The next Network meeting will focus on community safety and we will hear from a speaker from Victim Support. We will also seek a representative from Redbridge police.