**Notes of the meeting: Public and Voluntary Sectors’ Partnership,**

**Monday 10th March 2015** (5.00 p.m. – 6.45 p.m.), **@ RedbridgeCVS, Forest House, 16-20 Clements Road, Ilford Essex**

**Present:**

**Councillors:** Bhamra, Santos, Best, Blaber.

**Voluntary Sector Reps:** Jon Pushkin (Chair), John Garlick, Lorraine Silver, Sudarshan Bhuhi MBE (from item 7 onwards).

**Redbridge CCG:** Khalil Ali

**Officers in attendance:** Ross Diamond (RedbridgeCVS, note taker), Shila Barber (LBR).

1. **Welcome and Introductions, Jon Pushkin, Chairman**

Jon Pushkin welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

**Apologies & Substitutes**

Apologies were received from Cllr Sharma, Ch Insp John Fish (Police Service), Mark Simons (Fire Service), Nicholas Hurst (voluntary sector representative) and John Turkson (LBR).

1. **Declarations of Interest**

The Chair asked for any declarations to be made at the relevant part of the meeting.

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2015**

**3.1. Accuracy**

These were agreed to be an accurate record – with the exception of the date which should show 2015.

**3.2. Matters Arising**

Shila Barber informed the meeting that the approval of the Corporate Grants allocations for 2015/16 were due at that evening’s Cabinet meeting. The 3 unsuccessful applicants had given representations. Cllr Bhamra suggested that they all approach RedbridgeCVS for help (via the Community Fundraiser).

Shila said that there was likely to be a Community Fund round in the summer of 2015. She also noted that the Council would be undertaking a review of its grants programme to be reported to the Cabinet in the summer of 2015.

1. **Compact consultation responses for consideration and adoption**

Ross Diamond reported on the consultation processes, and responses received, for the consultation on the Redbridge Compact. He showed an analysis of the online responses received and the key responses he had received in other formats. As a result of these, RedbridgeCVS had produced a revised document for the PaVSP’s formal approval. (This had also included some suggested changes to the layout of the document, for ease of reading etc, which had been agreed between Ross at RedbridgeCVS and Shila at LBR).

The only outstanding issue was the CCG response – which Khalil Ali read to the meeting. This focused on a recommendation that the new Compact should not have the continued inclusion of a 12 week minimum consultation period as an aspiration (despite the draft document recognising that this will not always be possible and outlining mechanisms for agreeing when this aspiration cannot or should not be met), in line with the latest government guidance for civil service consultations. It was noted that Ross would meet with Louise Mitchell (CCG Chief Operating Officer) in the hope that they could agree a form of words that the CCG could sign up to. **Action: RD to meet with LM to discuss final wording relating to consultation periods.**

Discussions on the revised draft (which was tabled – with major changes to the previous draft highlighted) included suggestions to amend the wording relating to payments in advance - which it was agreed should now read “Full cost recovery principles will be adhered to, and payment of funding will be in instalments and in advance wherever possible (with the exception of “payments by results” contracts).”

It was agreed that Ross would circulate the revised draft (as tabled, with the additional change as agreed at the meeting) to all PaVSP members and Compact Champions with a request that they respond with any further comments or suggestions within two weeks. **Action: RD to circulate revised draft for comments.**

1. **Commissioning in Redbridge: Task and Finish Working Group**

Prior to the meeting RedbridgeCVS had circulated a paper outlining the purpose and processes for the Commissioning and Social Value Task and Finish Working Group, as suggested at the last meeting. This was agreed and would be used to drive the work of this group, which would report back to the PaVSP at its Away Day in the summer of 2015, and also fed into the work of the Redbridge Fairness Commission. Khalil noted that the CCG would want to link this work to its own procurement policies which were currently being reviewed.

The Working Group members had been agreed, with the exception of the Council’s representative. The Councillors on the PaVSP would agree after the meeting which of them would represent LBR on this Working Group. **Action: PaVSP Councillors to nominate a member of the Working Group.**

1. **Redbridge Fairness Commission - Information**

Cllr Santos, who is co-Chair of the Fairness Commission – gave an overview of the purpose and processes of the newly established Redbridge Fairness Commission. This would look at inequality and poverty in Redbridge and propose practical recommendations for addressing these. There would be 7 formal Commission meetings held in public, as well as a range of other engagement activities, including an online survey, visits by Fairness Commissioners to relevant services, Council officers undertaking a wide range of meetings with key stakeholders and reported to the Commission, three public meetings and peer-interviews. He reported that the first meeting had focused on health and wellbeing and had heard from LBR’s Public Health team, the academics who produced the influential Marmot Report and voluntary sector witnesses (from Healthwatch and RedbridgeCVS. In response to a question from Cllr Best, Cllr Santos said that key themes which had emerged from the first meeting included the importance of using the voluntary sector to engage local people and the need for a review of commissioning processes (in line with the suggestions made for the PaVSP Working Group). Jon Pushkin asked about the reporting mechanism for the Fairness Commission, and Cllr Santos said a final report would be submitted to the Council’s Cabinet for their consideration. This should include practical and sustainable recommendations for action. Cllr Santos noted that the three political parties in Redbridge were all engaging with the Commission and he was optimistic that its recommendations would be actioned.

1. **Redbridge Voluntary Sector Strategic Partner: Redbridge Citizens Advice Bureau**

Vanessa Guthrie, Chief Executive of Redbridge CAB was present to talk about their work, and their role as one of LBR’s Strategic Partners. She explained that Redbridge CAB is an independent charity (which is affiliated to the national CAB via a subscription fee, for which they get the rights to use recognised CAB branding, HR support, quality audits, policy-input and advice on changes to legal/welfare systems to help their advisors. They have an office base next to Ilford Station and provide free, impartial advice there and in some outreach venues. Vanessa explained that they have recently had to reduce their hours due to funding issues. They have been seeing 40 people per day (on Mons, Tues and Weds), and turning away a further 40 each day. Vanessa explained that she is the first Chief Exec of Redbridge CAB for 6-7 years and is looking to make a range of internal and external changes and improvements. Their main caseloads concern housing, debt, benefits and there has recently been a significant increase in the issues relating to “payday lenders”. Most of their clients live in the most deprived wards of Redbridge. They have 3.2 funded staff, plus Vanessa who is paid from the CAB’s reserves. They are hoping to grow – including by a greater use of volunteers. Their volunteer advisors receive 6 weeks of training – but many of these people use this as a springboard for employment so can’t always stay as volunteers for long with CAB. They have funding from a range of local public sector agencies. Their work has a huge benefit to people’s lives, including their health and wellbeing. They regularly prevent people from becoming homeless and prevent fuel-poverty etc. They are part of the Redbridge Advice Network (RAN), which includes a range of local agencies delivering advice. This seeks to improve co-ordination of services and ultimately to improve the range of advice service provision in Redbridge. Vanessa said that she is a member of the Fairness Commission and will try to influence local resource allocation in the light of the CAB’s experiences.

Vanessa then took questions from the PaVSP members. In response to these she said: they didn’t yet know if Crossrail would mean they had to move offices; they give information sheets to people they have to turn away (with details of online advice and alternative options); they offer outreach services, including at the Orchard Estate (in partnership with LBR Housing). She noted that their work was resource-intensive and although they promote a range of self-help options, unmet needs remain. Vanessa said she was working with LBR’s Head of Strategy to take a strategic approach to the future resourcing and deliver of advice in the borough. This looked likely to include a long term plan for housing issues (which often stem from other issues such as family breakdown, loss of employment, mental ill-health etc). She also said that housing is a huge issue in London – and particularly boroughs like Redbridge where people often moved to from inner-London and elsewhere as prices rise. Vanessa noted that they do work closely with Job Centre Plus – particularly on complex cases. She also noted that they receive a large number of calls from Newham residents, who they are unable to help. Vanessa and Ross noted that the Redbridge Advice Network (RAN) is mapping unmet need and gaps in services. This Lottery Funding partnership project is currently being independently evaluated ahead of its current funding coming to an end in the autumn of 2015. Vanessa said a diversity of providers was a positive thing – as people valued choice and wanted to work with groups who understood their particular needs (including with specific languages). Vanessa said that online and phone services can create additional demand in addition to those who would always need face-to-face advice. It was suggested that RAN do a survey one morning of those turned away at CAB to get more information on unmet needs. **Action: VG/RD to ask RAN to gather snapshot information on one day at CAB.** Vanessa said she was having useful discussions with NELFT and LBR and hoped to discuss their work with the CCG. They also plan to further develop their work with private lawyers who might offer pro bono services.

1. **Any Other Urgent Business**

Cllr Bhamra noted that the External Scrutiny Committee meets every two months to discuss emerging issues, eg Crossrail etc. he said the next meeting takes place on 18th March with the theme of Crime. Borough Commander Sue Williams (Met Police) will be attending and Cllr Bhamra invited those wanted to attend to email him to register (and submit questions).

CLOSE