**Notes of the Public & Voluntary Sectors’ Partnership meeting**

**Wednesday 7th March 2018 (5pm-7pm)** **at RedbridgeCVS, 103 Cranbrook Road,**

**Ilford IG1 4PU**

**Present:**

**NELFT:** Maria Thorn (Chair)

**Councillors:** B Littlewood, M Chaudhary

**Voluntary Sector reps:** John Garlick, Nigel Turner, Jon Pushkin, Nicholas Hurst, Bushra Tahir

**Officers in attendance:** Edith Galliers (LBR), Ross Diamond (RedbridgeCVS – note taker).

1. **Welcome and introductions**

Maria Thorn, chairing the meeting, welcomed everyone and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

1. **Apologies and substitutions**

Apologies were received from Khalil Ali and Marie Price (CCG), Jon Abrams, Su Bhuhi, Insp Elise Gellatley and Simon Parker.

1. **Declarations of interest**

The Chair reminded all members in attendance of the requirement to consider whether they have an interest in any matter on the agenda that needs to be disclosed and, if so, to declare an interest when the panel reaches that item on the agenda.

1. **Minutes of the meeting held 17 January 2018**
   1. Accuracy

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

* 1. Matters Arising

All actions had been undertaken.

Ross reported that he had met with Ian Tomkins (ELHCP) the day after Ian’s presentation to the PaVSP, along with the other CVSs that operate in the ELHCP area, to discuss ways they can work more closely together in future.

1. **Work Redbridge**

Liz Hannam, Manager of Work Redbridge, gave a presentation about this Council service that helps Redbridge residents over 16 who are looking for work, training, volunteering, apprenticeships or self-employment support. Liz explained the range of support available: The Virtual Hub - [www.redbridge.gov.uk/workredbridge](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/workredbridge) - a set of online resources; the weekly Job Club at the Salvation Army; the new “Case Loaded Support” for referred clients; the Preparing for Work programme, which is designed to prepare residents for claiming Universal Credit (which will come into force in Redbridge on 20th June 2018); the Progress to Work programme, which is designed for residents with a disability and provides intensive support on a 1:1 basis; and the Start Up Support programme, which offers 1:1 support to talk through business ideas and support with developing business plans etc.

The Case Loaded approach was the result of a major review of how Work Redbridge operates which was undertaken last year. It means that the residents most in need of 1:1 support can receive this. It includes sustained support after someone has secured paid employment, e.g., helping with childcare requirements. Liz said that Work Redbridge has a partnership of 20 local private and voluntary sector employment and training providers. They have strong partnerships with Volunteer Centre Redbridge and Redbridge CVS’ Employment and Skills Team as well as an evolving partnership with Project Malachi (Salvation Army) and the Welcome Centre regarding their work with homeless people. They also engage with, and refer clients to, other externally funded provision that can help them. They take self-referrals, and referrals from both the voluntary and public sector including ReFRS, Housing, Social Services, One Place East, NELFT mental health teams etc. She said that Work Redbridge works closely with employers – including in the voluntary sector - to learn about particular skills needs etc. They also work with LBR regarding opportunities brought about by Social Value commissioning within Council contracts and Housing developments. (LBR is the largest recruiter in the borough.) They also have a major focus on promoting apprenticeships for all ages, including, for example, women who may have spent out of the workforce raising children.

In response to questions Liz said that homeless people do not need to provide detailed evidence of ID or a formal address to be registered with Work Redbridge (and can give the Welcome Centre as a temporary address if required). Bushra asked if her group (Awaaz) can refer people directly, or should use ReFRS. Liz said that either route is fine. She said that referrals are dealt with quickly and should result in an appointment in about one week. Cllr Chaudhary asked if a lack of English language skills was often a barrier to finding work and Liz said it could be. She said that they run 15 “Conversation Clubs” which run for 10 weeks and provide a focus on the language of daily life and employment. RIAE and Redbridge College can also provide formal courses for people but these can be relatively expensive. The Work Redbridge Conversation Clubs cost £10 per term (though this can be waived if people can’t afford to pay the full amount). Bushra asked if Work Redbridge could provide a tutor for Awaaz members to access this service and Liz agreed to help arrange this. In response to a question from Cllr Chaudhary, Liz said that they don’t directly offer grants to start-up businesses, but can help to find and secure these where they exist (eg for environmental businesses) and can also help with cheap loan finance for start-ups.

1. **Community Cohesion**

Edith Galliers, Head of Policy Equalities and Communities at LBR, gave a presentation on LBR’s current work regarding Community Cohesion. She said there are currently three strands to this work: the new Community Network; the recruitment of a new Community Engagement Coordinator; and the “Innovating Redbridge” work that was currently underway.

Edith said that the Community Network is a new forum for strategic conversations about how to strengthen and support Redbridge’s diverse communities. It will provide a constructive space to talk about challenging and important community-related issues such as hate crime and give an opportunity for attendees to network with other community leaders, to share best practice and swap ideas. A key part of the meeting will be to prepare community responses to an emergency incident within the borough or in neighbouring boroughs. It will provide a communication network to ensure messages reach the wider community and will provide a forum to discuss work to support and promote community cohesion in the wake of an incident. It is expected to meet 3 times a year, and to circulate 3 email bulletins a year – though more meetings and communications may be necessary if there are emergency events that need addressing. The first meeting was held on 19th February and was well attended, though several groups who had registered did not turn up and more work to ensure a diverse attendance which is representative of the whole borough would be undertaken before the next meeting. This will include liaising with the Faith Forum. Cllr Littlewood said that all Councillors should attend, and Edith said that they had all been invited. She suggested that information about the Network could form part of the induction of new Councillors following the May election. Bushra asked if Network members’ contacts could be shared. Edith said LBR was now working out how best to enable and support networking amongst Network members. Nicholas reminded the meeting that the Safer Neighbourhood Board meets locally to discuss issues of concern with the police and relevant council staff. Bushra said that the police have an Independent Advisory Group that has a similar function to the Network (in identifying community tensions etc.,) and this meets every 6 weeks in Ilford police station.

Edith informed the meeting that LBR was in the process of recruiting a new Community Engagement Officer, with funding from the Home Office. The post aims to build more resilient communities and tackle the harms that extremists cause (though it is not anti-terrorism work). The post holder is expected to start in around 6 weeks, pending final clearances. The post will seek to increase understanding of the local drivers, prevalence and wider harms of extremism and help to share national insights in order to help shape local strategies and interventions. They will seek to identify local partners and help build local relationships to strengthen communities and reduce extremism. They will provide support to these partners through encouraging and supporting relevant funding bids (including the current “Building Stronger Britain Together Funding”) as well as offering general guidance, and mentoring. Jon Pushkin asked how different this would be to the Faith Officer role that the Police have. Edith said that this post was not about crime and they would ensure there was no duplication. John Garlick said he liked the strategic approach to this work, which contrasted with the very short term work that was established following the riots of 2011. Edith said that the post was currently funded for 12 months, but that LBR would continue the work in some form after the initial input. Jon Pushkin said that there was a worrying narrative around young Asian men being responsible for local crime. Edith said the Council and its leader take this very seriously. Cllr Chaudhary said that the recent local responses to crime have helped bring communities closer together which is one positive outcome.

Bushra said that Awaaz has run a number of anti-knife crime projects and Ross encouraged her – and all voluntary groups – to come and see the RedbridgeCVS Community Fundraiser, Shaweb Ahmed, who would be pleased to help try to find appropriate sources of funding and help with applications.

Edith talked about the first “Innovating Redbridge” series of events that was currently concluding. This had focused on “Neighbourhoods” in order to consider what tomorrow’s neighbourhoods should look like and how local people can work together. There were 8 events to discuss the issues and Edith said that LBR has learned a great deal about how local people view neighbourhoods and their future - and about how to run these kinds of events. Highlights of the events so far included entrepreneurs making connections with each other, a teacher saying that hearing her children speak at one event was “the defining moment” of her career, and a local resident who is a chef linking up with a Foodbank. Key themes that emerged included: the Social Value Act; valuing older people as assets; use of space – urban and green; creating a base for social action; and improved local giving. The next stage will be to publish the videos of the events online, provide opportunities for people who were not able to attend the events to contribute, and hold open sessions to discuss the events and work towards developing practical steps to take forward some of this work. Cllr Littlewood said the programme had been well organised and stimulating. He thought that the “Women Inspiring Social Action” event was particularly good. Edith said that the next Innovating Redbridge series of events would have the theme of Digital Working and would probably take place in late May onwards.

1. **Volunteer of the Year Awards**

It was noted that the PaVSP would like to oversee a “Redbridge Volunteer of the Year Awards” again this year. Ross circulated the promotional information/nomination forms that were used for the last awards process to everyone present. It was agreed that RedbridgeCVS/Volunteer Centre Redbridge should seek to host the Awards at the Volunteers Fair that usually takes places in the Town Hall each autumn.

1. **PaVSP Work Plan**

This was the last PaVSP meeting of the year – and future meetings would be dependent on LBR re-establishing the partnership after the election. Edith and Ross agreed to review the Terms of Reference so that this was fit for purpose (as it was a number of years since the last review). Members were asked for their thoughts on key topics for the PaVSP in 2018 onwards. Ross reminded members that the PaVSP had been responsible for overseeing the drafting of the local Compact and that this was due for renewal this year. He also reminded the meeting that the voluntary sector representatives were themselves elected on a three-year cycle and that there would need to be an election for them once the PaVSP was re-established, following the Council elections in May. Edith offered to attend a voluntary sector Network meeting to encourage people to take part in the elections for voluntary sector representatives to the PaVSP by saying how useful and important LBR found this work. Ross informed the meeting that Khalil Ali and Marie Price from Redbridge CCG had sent suggestions in their absence for future work as follows, “Due to so much change going on at CCG, BHR, and NEL levels, it may be helpful for information on the development of the Integrated Care System (formerly known as the ACS) involving the Health and Social Care partners across BHR. The Community and Voluntary Sector should be part of this. This will enable other issues to be covered such as financial pressures and response.” This suggestion was welcomed. John Garlick wanted the PaVSP to consider LBR’s wish that the voluntary sector could provide services to people who may no longer receive Council services following the recent day opportunities review, to see if this was viable. This suggestion was also welcomed.

1. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There was none.

CLOSE