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

**Wednesday 23rd November 2017 (5pm-7pm)** **at RedbridgeCVS, 103 Cranbrook Road,**

**Ilford IG1 4PU**

**Present:**

**NELFT:** Maria Thorn (Chair)

**Councillors:** Bob Littlewood, Gurdial Bhamra

**Voluntary Sector reps:** Jon Abrams, Nicholas Hurst, Nigel Turner, Jon Pushkin

**Redbridge Police:** Insp Elise Gellatley

**Officers in attendance:** Edith Galliers (LBR), Adam Sargent (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 John Garlick (substituted by Nicholas Hurst).

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 26 April 2017**

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

**Action: Elise Gellatley said she would send a list of the new senior policing team to Ross for circulation to PaVSP members.**

Edith informed the meeting that LBR continues to have match-funding for local Spacehive projects and they are encouraging Spacehive to undertake more active promotion. Ross said that Spacehive had (again) been failing to respond to RedbridgeCVS’ Community Fundraiser’s requests for them to take part in workshops for voluntary groups with us. **Action: Edith will email Spacehive to ensure they respond to this request.**

Ross updated the meeting on developments with the STP – which has now rebranded as the East London Health and Care Partnership. They are continuing to reconsider how they engage with the voluntary sector, having changed their thinking on the previous “Community Group” governance structure. Ross is meeting Ian Tomkins, the Director of Communications & Engagement, next week. **Action: Ross will invite Ian Tomkins (or a relevant colleague) to attend a future PaVSP meeting in line with the work programme.**

All other actions had been undertaken and all other matters arising were covered by the agenda.

1. **Fairness Commission update**

Cllr Bob Littlewood reported on those recommendations of the Fairness Commission that were not yet complete. He said that:

* The Outcomes Framework was being developed as part of the Borough Plan;
* The Disability Charter was now out for consultation, and should be adopted by March 2018;
* Accessibility Standards requirement will be met by the opening of the One Stop Shop (along with other relevant initiatives) early in 2018;
* The local housing shortfall is being met, in part, by the establishment of Redbridge Council’s wholly–owned development company, DEVCO. This is currently being set up and will start looking to build housing and mixed use units soon;
* The Economic Strategy – now called the Regeneration Strategy – will go to LBR Cabinet in December 2017;
* The “place branding” work is underway as “Redbridge 2025” (aka the Borough Plan);
* The Immigration Panel has completed its work, but further actions arising from this, including a voluntary sector network which is now being pulled together by RAMFEL, are underway.

Nigel Turner said that, despite having read both the Local Plan and the Borough Plan (Redbridge 2025) documents, he remained unclear about their differences and how they would affect each other. Edith said that the Local Plan document was a statutory requirement which outlined plans for physical planning whereas the Borough Plan (which all Councils have, and which has now been rebranded locally as “Redbridge 2025”) was a conversation about the kind of place that people wanted Redbridge to become. This would include a much wider range of considerations than just spatial regeneration, such as considering quality of life, education and health provision for local people. She said that the Redbridge 2025 work was led by a partnership including Redbridge Council and RedbridgeCVS as well as Redbridge College and the local NHS and police services. Nigel said that the two strands could not be totally separated. Edith agreed they were linked, but said that the Local Plan did not dictate everything that was to be covered by Redbridge 2025.

Jon Abrams said he was disappointed that the Disability Charter had taken so long to adopt as there have been many relevant changes (including new commissions and cuts) that would have benefited from the Charter being used and he felt that little had improved for disabled people as a result of the Commission. Jon Abrams said that he had repeatedly asked LBR to provide a cumulative impact assessment on its policies for disabled people. This should include the cumulative impact on disabled people of wider welfare reforms. He said that Liverpool Council and the Commission on Human Rights had undertaken similar cumulative impact assessments. Edith said that LBR Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) are undertaken for all specific budget changes and these are looked at cumulatively each year. She said these were very detailed, but did not look at the context of wider changes from DWP etc. Jon Abrams noted that the EqIAs don’t quantify the numbers of individuals negatively affected by changes, nor look at negative impacts on life expectancy, QUALYs etc. Nigel said this approach can lead to public sector agencies making changes that may save them money, but which negatively impact on service users leading to increased costs being incurred by other public sector agencies (eg the NHS). Jon Abrams said this was a national issue – not just affecting Redbridge. Cllr Littlewood said this work would be resource-intensive. **Action: Edith will go back to LBR to check what has been committed to.**

Jon Abrams said that LBR was no longer managing its consultation exercises as it had in the past. This meant that there were often many relevant consultations taking place simultaneously. Affected groups therefore have to prioritise which consultations to engage with, and the impact of one proposed change may not be considered cumulatively with another also being considered simultaneously.

Cllr Littlewood said that the impact of funding changes in one area does affect others but that LBR is changing how it manages its internal budgeting, so that areas which are overspending can get financial support from areas that are underspending. Cllr Bhamra said that cuts in the mental health services have led directly to greatly increased work for the police. Cllr Littlewood said he was unhappy that funding allocated to the NHS for child and adolescent health services (CAMHS) were not being properly ring-fenced and spent locally. This has led to the Chair of the Redbridge Children’s Safeguarding Board saying that local CAMHS services were in “severe crisis”.

Edith said that LBR was planning a celebration event two years after the completion of the Fairness Commission recommendations. This was likely to be in Feb/March 2018 and will include feedback on progress made. **Action: Edith to share details of the Fairness Commission event with partners once this is confirmed.**

1. **Public Sector Commissioning and the Social Value Act.**

Adam Sargent, Head of Supply Chain, PS Procure (LBR) gave a presentation on LBR’s approach to Commissioning and the Social Value Act. He explained the PS Procure is a unit of Waltham Forest Council which is now providing services for LBR. They are experienced in a wide range of ‘spend categories’ and they bring savings to LBR because they work across two councils. His key role is procurement, which just one part of the commissioning cycle, but they do get involved in all stages to ensure best practice is used.

Adam talked through the “commissioning cycle.” He said that formal procurement laws apply to tenders over £164k, whilst tenders below that threshold follow internal LBR regulations. He explained that price and quality thresholds are set for each service or product being commissioned – but said that they will not start to look at pricing unless they are satisfied with the quality of the offer. Adam confirmed that LBR does consider Social Value in all bids, regardless of size.

Adam outlined the Social Value Act. He said that when LBR colleagues want to procure a product or service, PS Procure ensure that they receive a strong business case which must include Social Value considerations. In Waltham Forest they award the Social Value parts of a tender at 10% (forming part of the quality considerations). In Redbridge there isn’t a set % agreed in the Standing Orders, but PS Procure requires at least 5%.

Adam said that Social Value often involves commitments to creating/using apprenticeships but he gave a wide range of other appropriate Social Value commitments that they would welcome. These include environmental benefits, such as reducing pollution and saving energy or social benefits such as involving volunteers or providing work opportunities for disadvantaged people.

In response to a question from Jon Pushkin, Adam said that they cannot take the fact that a potential supplier is local as evidence of added Social Value, but can use the impact of this to demonstrate environmental benefits, eg shorter journeys for suppliers etc. In response to a question from Cllr Bhamra, Adam said that LBR hasn’t captured the positive outcomes of using the Social Value Act yet. He said that Waltham Forest does have some positive examples, however, and he was optimistic that LBR would soon start to record and promote its own examples.

Jon Pushkin queried how LBR could influence suppliers, given that it had been unable to influence Sainsbury’s to include the desired levels of affordable housing in its developments. Cllr Littlewood said that economic viability was often an excuse for not delivering, but housing developers were different to people seeking to win tenders to deliver services or goods. Edith said that LBR’s new DEVCO should make improvements in this area. With regards to suppliers, she said they often push back to the Contract Management Board (the new body overseeing procurement locally) over costs and Social Value but the Board’s governance requires them to consider Social Value.

Nigel asked how the public are involved in commissioning and Adam said that there are often consultations at the first stage, eg with young people and their families regarding a specification for a youth service provision. He said these consultations often ensured that the most useful and relevant services were procured. They also try to engage service users in the tender evaluation process.

Jon Abrams commended the Cabinet Office Review of the Social Value Act. He asked LBR how they calculate unit costs for Social Value, eg how much per hour would they calculate for a volunteer placement or “reducing social isolation”? Adam said that they just compare applications – eg so that 5 volunteers would have more ‘value’ than 3.

Jon Abrams asked if LBR still uses arbitrary turnover thresholds for procurement – as these favour the larger bidders. Adam said they do use turnover thresholds, to help ensure that they aren’t risking buying services or goods from organisations that may go out of business or who might be over-reliant on LBR as their sole source of income. He also said that the maximum threshold they are allowed to require is double the contract-value. When calculating how high to set the threshold, LBR considers how easy it would be to re-procure in the event that a supplier went into liquidation. He also said that they are required to put contracts into small lots whenever possible – thereby opening up the potential for bids from smaller suppliers. Adam also said that they do sometimes go straight to single suppliers without tendering where there are good reasons for doing so.

Edith suggested that this discussion could be usefully continued with a wider range of voluntary sector organisations.

1. **Volunteers’ Awards**

Ross circulated information on the previous winners of the Redbridge Volunteer of the Year Awards that had been overseen by the PaVSP. The categories were: Outstanding Volunteer of the Year; Longstanding Volunteer of the Year; and Young Volunteer of the Year.

It was agreed that the PavSP would oversee a Volunteers Awards process and event in the summer of 2018. RedbridgeCVS/Volunteer Centre Redbridge would manage the process, with the PaVSP providing panellists to select the winning nominations. RedbridgeCVS would look at hosting the Awards Event as part of either the annual Volunteers Fair or Community Day (both of which take place in and around the Town Hall). **Action: Ross to prepare application forms and publicity materials for approval by the PaVSP. Ross to make plans for an Awards Event.** It was suggested that we approach local businesses for sponsorship of the event and any trophies that might be awarded.

1. **PaVSP Work Plan**

Ross circulated the work plan for the rest of the year. This was approved, with the addition of topics covering homelessness and Work Redbridge. **Action: Ross to invite relevant speakers and agree agendas with the Chair.**

1. **Any Other Urgent Business**

Cllr Bhamra was concerned at the increase in demands on the police (caused in part, he suggested, by poorer local mental health services) and the police’s inability to respond appropriately (including to 101 calls). Elise Gellatley explained that the East Area BCU has now changed its response system back to a single-borough arrangement. This has improved things, but the data is lagging behind the improvements.

Nicholas Hurst said that there have been 4 suicides in Redbridge in the past 4 weeks. He is now part of moves to bring the Barking & Dagenham and Havering Suicide Prevention Group to include Redbridge.

Nicholas said that Frenford Clubs will be 90 years old next year and will be hosting a range of events to celebrate.

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