

MAIN VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS FORUM

Minutes of meeting held 9.45am, Wednesday 8th June 2011
Committee Rooms 1, Kensington Town Hall, London W8 7NX

Chair: **Mary Gardiner** (Kensington & Chelsea Social Council)
Attendance list attached

1.	WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES	ACTION
1.1	<p>Mary welcomed everyone to the meeting and passed on apologies of those unable to attend. She then presented a warm welcome to Councillor Rock Feilding-Mellen.</p>	
1.2	<p>Those present introduced themselves and highlighted any new or important areas of work. The introductions ended with Councillor Rock Feilding-Mellen introducing himself to the forum. Cllr. Mellen is a Cabinet Member for Civil Society and is also on the Major Planning Development Committee and a member of the Kensington and Chelsea Partnership Steering Group.</p> <p>Cllr. Mellen warned that the coming years will be tough for the voluntary sector; however he wanted the forum to know how much their work is valued by the council.</p> <p>Mary commented saying the council gives the sector a significant amount of money each year, so it's important that we show them we're worth much more than that. She added, not only do we provide high quality services to those in need, but we also bring in volunteers, money, create jobs and help keep things together.</p>	
1.3	<p>Mary went on to announce the unfortunate loss of Deborah Wallworth (Voluntary Sector Manager RBKC) and paid condolences. She said Deborah was a valued colleague who will be dearly missed. She also mentioned a minibus was arranged by the Social Council to take people to her funeral, which she said was a very emotional occasion. Mary asked if anyone that knew her wanted to say a few words about her.</p> <p>Dee said Deborah was valued by the sector. She was always there for us - when there was money and also when there wasn't any money, and she had a great sense of humour.</p> <p>Filsan said Deborah was an excellent officer, who understood our needs and was always very helpful.</p> <p>Jane said Deborah was extremely supportive of their Independent Care Service and would be missed.</p> <p>The forum paid tribute to Deborah with a round of applause.</p>	

2.	<p>CREDIT UNION UPDATE Gareth Evans Director, Grant-writing, Research, Evaluation (GRE) Consulting</p>	
2.1	<p>Gareth began by informing the forum that he had given a presentation recently on the Credit Union, explaining what it is, how it will work and the benefits of Credit Union etc. He said he will try to avoid repeating what has already been mentioned and will attempt to update the forum on any new developments.</p>	
2.2	<p>The project has been in working progress now for 12 months and is still in development. The project is being led by a steering group, which consists of some large organisations including the Tenant Management Organisation, Catalyst Housing Group and VCOs such as Kensington & Chelsea Social Council.</p> <p>The focus of the past few months has been securing funds to set up the Credit Union and finance it for the first year. So far £400,000 has been secured.</p> <p>The Credit Union will be authorised and regulated by the Financial Service Authority.</p> <p>The management board has been interviewing candidates to fill up to 10 posts. Applicants have been of high calibre and very diverse, ranging from professionals in the field to local residents who are eager to be part of the Credit Union.</p> <p>Gareth said it is hoped that the Credit Union will attract deposits from the community, particularly from the wealthier residents, and added that making a deposit into the Credit Union will not only give you financial return, but will also mean the person is supporting the community, which can be a very powerful thing.</p>	
2.3	<p>People living in the borough will be able to bank with the Credit Union, as well as access affordable finance by becoming a member. Anyone can become a member regardless of their financial status; however loans will be given upon assessing individual financial circumstances including income and expenditure. If a loan is refused, members won't just be turned away, they will be given relevant advice and support.</p> <p>The Credit Union will be owned and run by its members and all profits will go back to its members.</p> <p>Councillor Jonathon Read (Earl's Court Ward) is currently the chair of the Credit Union.</p> <p>Gareth stressed the importance of the voluntary sectors involvement in the success of the Credit Union, saying that they will have an important role in getting the message across to the community. It is hoped that this would be a good opportunity for the Credit Union and the voluntary sector to work together to help the community financially.</p>	

2.4	<p>Gaenor asked if organisations can become members of the Credit Union.</p> <p>Gareth said that at the moment legislation does not allow any organisation to become a member of a Credit Union anywhere in the UK. However, it is hoped that future developments will mean that organisations can join Credit Unions.</p>	
	<p>Mary pointed out that an estimated 24,500 residents do not currently have bank accounts in Kensington and Chelsea. So the priority would be to encourage them all to join the Credit Union</p>	
2.5	<p>Jane asked if there would be 'jam jar' accounts available (i.e. it would allow customers to split their account balance into 'Jam Jars' for spending, saving and bill payment etc.).</p> <p>Gareth replied jam jar accounts would be available. He also mentioned that jam jar accounts were an effective way for a lot of people to manage their budgets.</p>	
2.6	<p>Cllr Feilding-Mellen asked what levels of deposits are required before lending can start.</p> <p>Gareth said the Credit Union is hoping to borrow money from housing associations so lending can begin immediately. There is also expectation that the wealthy will deposit larger amounts of money into the Credit Union, so loans can be given. Loans will range from £50.00 to £15,000.00, but the larger loans won't be made until the Credit Union is well established.</p>	
2.7	<p>Filsan asked if the Credit Union was still recruiting staff.</p> <p>Gareth said recruitment has been put on hold while an application to the FSA is being made, but will resume after the application is made. He also said they will be looking to recruit volunteers, both skilled as well as those who want to be trained.</p>	
2.8	<p>Gareth concluded his update by reminding the forum that the Credit Union will be insured and any deposits made will be protected by the government.</p>	
3.	<p>FUTURE OF K&C Local Involvement Network (LINK) <i>Angela Spence Policy Development Manager, Kensington & Chelsea Social Council (KCSC) on behalf of Paula Murphy, Coordinator, K&C LINK</i></p>	
3.1	<p>Angela forwarded apologies to the forum from Paula, who was unable to present due to being unwell.</p> <p>She talked through the presentation Paula had prepared, and said she would try to answer any questions to the best of her ability.</p> <p>Angela reminded the forum that major reforms to NHS and commissioning were being proposed or made.</p> <p>Due to concerns of the public the government has been engaged in a listening exercise, which came to an end recently. As a result, the Prime Minister gave us five guarantees and promised that the NHS will not be privatised.</p>	

3.2	Angela went on to explain that every borough has a LINK, which is made up of individuals and community groups working together to improve health and social care services. There are 850 local residents and representatives involved with K&C LINK. As part of the reforms, LINKs will evolve into Local Health Watches (LHW).	
3.3	The Health and Social Care Bill sets out the duties and responsibilities for local authorities, Health Watch England and Local Health Watch organisations. Local authorities will continue their role as commissioners for Local Health Watch, as they currently do for LINK, while Health Watch England will be a national champion gathering intelligence from Local Health Watch to present the national voice for people who use and need health and social care services.	
3.4	LINK will retain existing powers and acquire additional functions in helping people access information and advocacy. LINK has applied for pathfinder status to pilot LHW, and will know in late June if their application has been successful.	
3.5	Angela explained that the NHS has a duty to involve the public throughout the GP Commissioning process, which will mean the presence of patient representatives on GP Commissioning Consortia Boards, as well as board meetings being held in public. There will also be representation through health and well-being boards and patient participation groups, and increased opportunities for more public engagement.	
3.6	The role of Patient Participation Groups will be to provide analysis of service provision, to be actively involved in the running of a practice, ensure improved communication with the community and influence commissioning. LINK is currently developing a support framework for the Patient Participation Group.	
3.7	<i>See appendix A for questions</i>	
4.	THE BIG SQUEEZE - Alison Blackwood Head of Policy, London Voluntary Sector Council (LVSC)	
4.1	The Big Squeeze is a research project and campaign focusing on the value of the London's voluntary and community sector during the recession as well as the impact cuts have had on the sector. The first survey was conducted in 2009 by London Voluntary Sector Council (LVSC) and their third survey came to an end in March 2011. The first survey was about the impact of the recession, whereas this year, as Britain has technically come out of the recession, the focus is on the impact of public spending cuts.	
4.2	The surveys show that there is quantitative evidence that the situation for the sector is very bad. 51% of organisations said they have had to end services.	
4.3	The next part of Alison's presentation was used to explain some of the findings over the past three years. <i>See appendix B for statistics.</i>	

5.	IMPACT OF THE CUTS SURVEY KCSC – Angela Spence	
5.1	<p>Angela appealed to members of the forum to complete the Impact of the Cuts survey on KCSC website as it will give the sector a better understanding of the consequences the public sector cuts are having in the borough. She also said KCSC would like to feed their findings into LVSC’s Big Squeeze report.</p> <p>She talked the forum through the survey presented on PowerPoint.</p> <p>Dee said she would really like to have detailed information about how cuts are affecting residents (e.g. a list of individuals/households are worse off by ‘x’ amount as a result of cuts) She encouraged organisations to gather such information and asked if there was a template she could use to conduct such a survey with her service users.</p> <p>Alison said she can forward a template the Citizens Advice Bureau</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>Alison</p>
6.	KCSC ANNOUNCEMENTS, TRAINING AND EVENTS:	
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The managers support group has been reinstated. It will take place the first Monday of every month at the Lighthouse. • KCSC’s new website is up and running • BVOAG - 15th June 6.30pm - 8.30pm KTH. Pre meeting, 5.30pm - 6.30pm KTH Room 5 • Funding Fair Plus - 17th June, 10.00am - 4.00pm KTH • Sexual Health Conference - 21st June, 10.00am - 4.00pm London Lighthouse • KCP - Wednesday 6th July, 5.00pm - 7.00pm, venue tbc • Engaging Communities VOF -Wednesday 13th July, 10.00am- 12.00pm KTH • Older Peoples VOF – Monday 18th July, 3.00pm – 5.00pm KTH 	
7.	FEEDBACK FROM OTHER FORUMS AND NETWORKS	
7.1	Kensington & Chelsea Partnership (KCP): Meeting held 11th May. Main agenda items included an update on progress of apprentices of the Partnership Apprenticeship Scheme and discussion on future funding. Credit Union update, and changes to housing benefits. Michael also mentioned that the KCP was at a turning point and be restructured so that there will be three business meetings and three development meetings a year.	
7.2	Borough Voluntary Organisations Advisory Group (BVOAG): Meeting held 14th March. Main topics for discussion were the K&C Compact, brief discussions on the Tri Borough developments and rent increases for council tenants from April 2011. Brendan O’Keefe also updated the group on the Employee led mutuals pathfinder project for RBKC Youth Support and Development Services.	
7.3	Children, Young People and Families VOF: Meeting held 25th May. The main focus of the meeting was a presentation by Brendan O’Keefe on RBKC’s Youth Services plans to transition into an employee led mutual. Victoria Hunt presented on RBKC’s children and families needs assessment.	

7.4	Engaging Communities VOF: Meeting held 28th April. Garmon Ap Garth gave a presentation on the learning opportunities available at Birkbeck University and bursaries for applicants on low income. Ian Cann gave an update to the changes on the Trust's Community Trust Fund. Members participated in an interactive session looking at partnership work.	
7.5	Older Peoples VOF: Meeting held 4th April. Steven Tucker gave a presentation on the future of Public Health. Cynthia Dize gave a quick update on the Tri Borough developments and Compact. There was a consultation exercise regarding the proposed changes to the OP VOF.	
7.6	Voluntary Agencies Advice Forum (VAAF): Meeting held 14th March. The main focus of the meeting was the changes to housing allocation. Robert Shaw gave an update on the changes to housing allocation policy. Simon Bisiker gave an update on Rugby Portobello's youth service provision.	
7.7	Kensington and Chelsea Local Involvement Network (K&C LINK): LINK has set up an online forum to capture thoughts and queries on how Local HealthWatch should develop. LINK is currently mapping information provision in the borough in sample of areas to explore how the statutory role of Local HealthWatch can support the good practice already established and sign-post effectively. K&C LINK is currently seeking a representative for the INWL JSNA. The K&C LINK is currently seeking volunteers to stand for election to the LINK Management Group for 2011/2.	
8.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING	
8.1	The minutes of the meeting held 7 th March 2011 were agreed.	
9.	AGENDA PLANNING	
9.1	No specific matters were identified for the next meeting.	
10.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
10.1	There were no other items of business.	
11.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
11.1	Tuesday 21st September 2011. 9.45am to 1.00pm, Committee Room 1, Kensington Town Hall	

	Appendix A - Questions put forward to Angela (answered by Paula Murphy)	
1	<p>Will health watch have advocacy powers or will they commission advocacy?</p> <p>The Bill refers to Local Health-Watch providing access to information and advocacy. We are promoting local determination for what that mean on a borough by borough basis. In K&C, our reports show that our preferred option is signpost people effectively to advocacy services and that there would be a structured relationship between the current LINK structure etc. and the information & advocacy providers to form Local Health-Watch. We are mapping both areas this year to inform thinking on what that might look like.</p>	
2	<p>What are your views on high level clinicians being proposed to be involved in GP commissioning, as there was a sense this would further remove commissioning away from the communities?</p> <p>This is an interesting question and we would like to hear the views of other people. Some of our members have said that it will be useful to have the input of expert clinicians into commissioning decisions as well as the knowledge and local expertise of GPs. At present K&C LINK is working to ensure that there public and patient involvement in commissioning at all levels of the new structures. We will let you know more about this soon.</p>	
	Appendix B - Big Squeeze report figures	
	<p>Is the recession/cuts are affecting the communities VCOs work with?</p> <p>2011: 97%</p> <p>2010: 97%</p> <p>2009: 95%</p> <p>Has the recession / cuts caused your workload to increase?</p> <p>2011: 82%</p> <p>2010: 68%</p> <p>2009: 71%</p> <p>Are you confident you can meet increased demand?</p> <p>2011: 58%</p> <p>2010: 75%</p> <p>2009: 80%</p> <p>Are you already taking action to survive?</p> <p>2011: 94%</p> <p>2010: 93%</p> <p>2009: 78%</p> <p>Are you expecting public sector funding to decrease next year</p> <p>2011: 77%</p> <p>2010: 53%</p> <p>2009: n/a</p> <p>Has new government policy affected the communities you work with in the last year?</p> <p>Yes: 97%</p> <p>No: 3%</p>	

	<p>Have any of your services closed over the last year? Yes: 51% No: 49%</p> <p>Are you expecting any of your services to close in the next year? Yes: 54% No: 46%</p>	
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ATTENDANCE LIST

Main Voluntary Organisations' Forum Meeting

9.45am, Wednesday 8th June 2011, Committee Room 1, Kensington Town Hall

1. ATTENDANCE LIST

	Name	Organisation
1	Jamie Renton	Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea
2	Stella Blair	Advocate for Mental Health
3	Zohal Khowejn	CARA Trust
4	Ian Caan	Catalyst Housing group
5	Francis Oppong	Chapter 1
6	Charles Barber	Citizen's Advice Bureau
7	Clare Richards	Clement James Centre
8	Tom Fitch	Community Account Self Help
9	Pam Bardouille	Dalgarno Neighbourhood Trust
10	Andrzej Wdowiak	Earl's Court YMCA
11	Jane Turner	Inkerman Housing Association
12	Gaenor Holland-Williams	Kensington & Chelsea Forum for Older Residents
13	Nour-Eddine Aboudihaj	Kensington & Chelsea Forum for Older Residents
14	Mary Gardiner (Chair)	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
15	Mohammed Miah (Minutes)	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
16	Angela Spence	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
17	Michael Bach	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
18	Kirsten Oehl	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
19	Robin Tuck	Kensington and Chelsea Local Involvement Network
20	Dee Dainton	Lancaster West Children's Community Network
21	Alsion Blackwood	London Voluntary Sector Council
22	Filsan Ali	Midaye Somali Development Network
23	Waris Mohamoud	Midaye Somali Development Network
24	Intlak Al-Saiegh	Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre
25	Iris Apablaza	Nova New Opportunities
26	Helen Leech	Open Age
27	Joanna Edward	Prospects Kensington Ltd.
28	Everine Shand	RBKC Tenant Management Organisation
29	Cllr. Rock Feilding-Mellen	Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

30	Monsur Khan	Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea
31	Colin Kelly	Royal London Society for Blind
32	Kathrin Schwarz	Thames Reach K & C
33	Russell Bushell	Thames Reach K & C
34	Kirsty Palmer	Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea
35	Steven Platts	West London Churches Homeless Concern

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE WERE RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING

	Name	Organisation
1	Madeleine Gilkes	Carers Kensington and Chelsea