In listening to the speech on the Civil Society Strategy presented by Danny Kruger followed by the panel debate and Q &A session with the audience. All in attendance were invited to give their response to the new Civil Society Strategy.   A summary of what was captured is below:

- Services are going back in-house to the council (RBKC) so it is not a strong argument that Local Authorities have no money

- Moving people from volunteering into paid employment is what many people who volunteer want – however volunteering is not leading to employment for many people.

- There is no equal opportunities in terms of empowerment, particularly for certain sections of the community

- Public funds must total cultural change (not lip service) – however the Civil Society Strategy does not demonstrate this as well as how it will lead to sustainable change for year to come?

This was then followed by a session in which members of the audience were asked to discuss and respond to the following highlighted questions. The responses have been categorised under themes and summarised below:

1. What are the barriers to making civil society work locally?

Difficult funding environment

- Fragmented funding of the voluntary and community sector

- Social media fundraising is difficult for small charities

- Too many loan schemes for small charities

- Too many charities competing for funds

- Marketisation blocks civil society action

- Hedge fund opportunists who use social need to accrue value to personal fortune

Lack of collaboration

- Silo thinking

- Duplication of services

- Isolated projects

Not enough communication

- Lack of communication between charities

Cultural differences

- Cross sector dialogue is difficult because of different culture/language

- Some organisations empowered year after year, others are not – forcing them into extinction

Lack of investment in volunteering

- Volunteering without investment does not work

2. How do we overcome the barriers?

Collaboration

- Think big, unite through genuine common set of beliefs

- Services remain connected and accountable

- Need more collaboration, sharing of skills, space and knowledge/more work with JCP/DWP who place undue pressure on vulnerable people

Community development

- Tackle symptoms not just causes

- Need community mobilisation

Capacity building

- New and established organisations need to be ready and capable of designing, delivering and reviewing what they do with local people

- Local people need the skills and knowledge and confidence to participate. They need a range of support to develop this

Regulation

- Need services to be trusted/better regulated so other organisations know they can refer to them and clients will receive quality support

<u>Voice</u>

- Give everyone a voice through KCSC

- Need mechanisms in place to ensure that the voices of the community are really being heard

3. How can we make civil society work locally? Your positive thoughts

<u>Knowledge of Civil Society Organisations and services</u>

- Have a centralised map/database of services locally e.g. roads to wellbeing which used to exist

- Better use of IT systems (databases) to civil society organisations to give a louder common voice

<u>Partnerships and Voice</u>

- Create a forum to have real dialogue on a new way forward/more conversation

- Collaboration between different groups, pooling their talents and expertise

- Enable local VCOs to work together or even merge

- Partnerships/sharing resources

- Continue to have networking opportunities/chances to share

- Spend time developing collective values and objectives by getting to know each other/build trust

- More flexibility and willingness to respond and adapt to changing needs

<u>Government and Politics</u>

- Need a ministerial role for social housing and re-regulation of housing

- Need to join in local politics

- Convince residents their vote counts in elections and manifestos are not empty words

<u>Communication</u>

- Develop stronger networks of communication between local organisations about provision

<u>Local investment/community solutions</u>

- Investment in prevention at local level

- Need local authorities rather than national/central government to work with local organisations

- Vocalise local issues, enable effort to be focussed in areas which have the greatest impact

- Support community solutions

- To encourage people to become involved they need to know and understand what they can do

- Places for community ownership

KCSC's role

- Play a part in facilitating information flow to prevent duplication within the voluntary sector

- Strengthen communities through KCSC

- Continue to do great work in bringing people together and highlighting important issues

Council's role

- Tackle commissioning agenda at source of identifying problems

- Employ people from the local community

- Prioritise reflecting our communities in our workforce and volunteers

- FacilitateSeek local employers

How KCSC will respond

- Continue to facilitate partnerships, networking opportunities.

- Working to develop a cohesive and shared database of VCOs and their services

- Developing our community engagement role throughout 2019