## **PRESENT**

## **Members of the Committee**

Councillor Gerard Hargreaves (Chairman)

## **Voluntary Organisation Representatives in Attendance**

Angela Spence (Kensington and Chelsea Social Council)

Jane Gray (Advice)

Victoria Vasey (Advice)

Clare Richards (Education)

Jamie Renton (Equality and Inclusivity)

Karimah Bin Dawoud (Health and Wellbeing)

Amelia Mustapha (Mental Health)

**Also in Attendance**

Melanie Marshman (RBKC, Head of Community Engagement)

Tony Redpath (RBKC, Director of Strategy and Local Services)

Paul Rackham (RBKC, Head of Commissioning, Prevention)

Rupa Parmar (RBKC, Head of Commissioning)

Pete Westmore (WCC, Public Health)

Akram Salhab (Migrants Organise)

**1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, AND INTRODUCTIONS**

1.1Councillor Hargreaves welcomed the group to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies for absence were received from Clare de Silva, Councillor Press and Councillor Mary Weale, Val Patterson, Baljit Badesha, Naami Padi and Jan Halliday.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2.1 None.

**3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2016**

3.1 Karimah Bin Dawoud requested that air pollution be added to A.O.B in the December minutes as in her absence, the subject was raised Angela Spence.

3.2 With the addition of the above, the minutes were agreed to be an accurate account of the meeting.

3.3 Councillor Hargreaves asked the group to report on the progress of their actions from the previous meeting and It was confirmed that all outstanding actions had been completed.

**4. UPDATE ON REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT**

4.1 Akram Salhab updated the group on the recent resettlement of the first family in the borough. Attention was drawn to the continuing difficulty associated with identifying suitable and affordable housing in the borough.

4.2 The Government has committed to the resettlement of 20,000 refugees, thus far the majority of families have been housed in other areas of the UK, and numbers in London have been relatively small in comparison.

4.3 Representatives of the local Welcome Committee met with the Council recently to explore alternative ways to identify suitable housing. The Council has agreed to take on tenancies on behalf of refugee’s families therefore guaranteeing landlords letting properties guaranteed income for a period of three years. The Welcome Committee is also fundraising to bridge the gap between Local Housing Allowance and market rents. The Welcome Committee recently held an event at the Mosaic Room, in addition £10,000 was raised. The Council has committed to match this and any future funding raised up to the total value of £60,000. Akram reminded the group that time is of the essence as the families who continue to wait for accommodation are living in poor conditions.

4.4 Clare Richards queried how much funding per household was required. Tony Redpath informed Clare that this was dependent on a variety of factors, including accommodation type, size and location, for instance the North of the borough would be cheaper than the South and smaller properties could be cheaper than larger homes.

4.5 Melanie Marshman shared statistics on the average rents brackets within the borough, highlighting the gap between the Local Housing Allowance and the market rent over a three-year period. Melanie approximations were £3,800 for studio flat, £24,000 for a one bed flat, £42,500 for a two bed flat and £116,000 for a four bed property.

4.6 Karimah bin Dawoud suggested the group contact the organisation ‘Better Community’. The contact would be Tariq Hussain for a possible avenue for additional funding.

4.7 Amelia Mustapha queried as to whether the Council believed landlords were aware of the need for housing. Councillor Hargreaves explained that the Council have advertised the scheme and the Welcome Committee is liaising with estate agents to find suitable landlords.

4.8 Clare Richards queried the prospect of engaging with Churches for their houses/properties. Councillor Hargreaves stated in his experience, that it is exceptionally difficult to accomplish.

4.9 The group came to the understanding that other regions within England were achieving better results, such as Coventry, as housing is more readily available. Accommodation is a London wide issue. The London Borough of Camden has had some success, although they had used their own stock and temporary accommodation to house families. This was not an option in the Royal Borough.

4.10 Councillor Hargreaves informed the group of around thirty unaccompanied children currently in the borough who were being supported by the Council through a separate scheme.

4.11 Akram Salham shared news of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham’s video which was aimed at landlords. The video also featured snippets from celebrities who spoke about the scheme, raising needed awareness. Akram suggested the video could be used in the borough to promote the scheme.

4.12 Drawing the item to a close, Councillor Hargreaves summarised the feedback from the group and echoed the difficulty of the task at hand, however the Council and the Welcome Committee will continue to work together.

**5.**  **CHANGES TO THE SHARED SERVICES ARRANGEMENTS**

5.1 Tony Redpath introduced the agenda item and invited Paul Rackham and Rupa Parmer to contribute to the discussion.

5.2 Tony Redpath explained how the parting of the shared services was instigated when RBKC and Westminster became aware that LBHF were exploring options for sovereign services. The Council, along with Westminster, felt that these developments would disconcert staff and decided to take control of the situation and serve one year’s notice.

5.3 Work on the separation of services is at the very early stages. Useful and professional discussions are occurring between all parties. All involved are concerned about guaranteeing successful services in each of the three boroughs. At this point there are no further details though some services may remain together, where they are currently working well. New Bi-Borough arrangements between the Council and Westminster are being discussed.

5.4 Tony added that it is with regret this is occurring but in the long-term the quality of services should be maintained for service users, and this is the priority. Tony invited the group to share their observations.

5.5 Paul Rackham said in the past it had been difficult for senior managers to manage their services as each Council had dissimilar priorities and expectations, therefore the separation may make managing services easier in future. On a further note, none of the existing contracts are shared, only the management is combined, so disruption should be fairly minimal.

5.6 Pete Westmore added that Public Health has only ever been in existence as a tri-borough service. This is an opportunity to simplify governance arrangements and look at areas which aren’t working well. Also, there may be a separate director for Public Health but this isn’t clear at this moment.

5.7 Jamie Renton questioned how the savings from the tri-borough arrangements will be maintained after the separation. Tony Redpath responded by stating that this would be a critical consideration going forward, and at this point the Council cannot say whether it would be more expensive as we are yet to work out the detail. Paul Rackham said that staffing structures would eventually be reviewed.

5.8 Karimah added that a Bi-Borough arrangement will still have some money saving benefits. Tony and Councillor Hargreaves agreed that it will be business as usual within the Councils, and they’re committed to keep the Voluntary Sector duly notified of any relevant changes or developments.

5.9 Angela Spence enquired whether Officers’ time will be focused on the separation. Councillor Hargreaves declared that senior officers will be focused on their services. Rupa Parmer confirmed that the Council’s commitment and drive has remained the same and service delivery will not be impacted by political discussions.

**6**. **VOLUNTARY SECTOR ADAPTING TO CHANGE**

6.1 Angela Spence introduced the item. Angela said it was not a time for the Voluntary Sector to relax in the current climate as the future is not yet certain, even though the Council had allocated funding through Corporate Grants for two years.

6.2 Amelia Mustapha introduced SMART mental health charity which have over 30 years of experience. They have improved over the last few years and adapted to change. They have done so by using business planning to identify issues and avoid them strategically, as well as encouraging partnerships and alliances, both formal and informal. SMART continue to work in partnership with KCSC, CCG and others to develop a shared understanding of services and accountability. They are working to create a hub and share their learning with other voluntary groups.

6.3 Amelia Mustapha thanked the Council for signing the Compact, stating that SMART will continue to look at other funding streams to evade any dependence upon Council funding.

6.4 Following a group discussion, Clare Richards acknowledged that being in receipt of Council funding could make an organisation more attractive to other funders.

6.5 Amelia Mustapha expressed gratitude to the group and said she would keep the group updated with any developments.

6.6 The group briefly discussed the various funding streams aimed at supporting older people. Karimah Bin Dawoud argued that some of this funding could be diverted to tackling obesity as this is a major concern.

**7.** **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

7.1 Melanie Marshman shared a draft plan of the BVOAG AGM and invited the group to share their feedback. The suggested theme of the AGM is responding to the Casey Review. Melanie added that Dame Louise Casey had been invited to be the key note speaker, and Melanie is now awaiting a response.

7.2 The group discussed the agenda topics and it was suggested to seek representation from other organisations such as the Police. Councillor Hargreaves suggested giving groups an opportunity to showcase their work. Tony Redpath suggested that panel discussions should be kept to a minimum.

7.3 The group discussed several ideas such as themed discussions around areas of the Casey Review which are relevant in the borough. They discussed ways to attract smaller and larger organisations from different demographics, such as BME groups.

7.4 Councillor Hargreaves brought discussions to a close and added that Angela Spence and Melanie Marshman would continue to develop a plan for the AGM informed by feedback from the group.

**8.** **VOLUNTARY SECTOR MATTERS**

8.1 Angela Spence informed the group that herself, Tony Redpath and Melanie Marshman had met with youth commissioners to discuss the establishment of a Youth Foundation in the borough. Following this meeting Rupa Parmar has discussed the model with John Lyons and they will meet again on 2 June. It was felt to be inappropriate for a Youth Foundation to be funded by Children’s Services as this would lead to a conflict of interest, and that Corporate Grants might be a more suitable source of funding. On a further note, the Youth Foundation in Hammersmith and Fulham had been successful in attracting funding from MOPAC.

8.2 Angela Spence asked for an update on consultation on the new Adult Social Care Hub. Melanie Marshman has said the consultation had been postponed until after the election on 8 June. However, Gary Lisney had confirmed that the Property Department would welcome input from the voluntary sector.

8.3 Victoria Vasey questioned the assertion that there had been little impact on advice agencies following the decommissioning of the Housing Advice Service, and believes a resolution will need to be found. Councillor Hargreaves declared that this topic should be on the agenda for the next meeting.

**9.** **COUNCIL GENERAL MATTERS**

9.1 Melanie Marshman invited the group to ask questions and also asked organisations to encourage their members to register to vote in the general election before the 22 May deadline.

9.2 Councillor Hargreaves said information on Silver Sunday will be sent to the group.

9.3 Angela Spence queried whether there continued to be a decent uptake of City Living, Local Life funding from Voluntary Organisations. Melanie Marshman said she believed so, but would provide further information. She also reminded the group that organisations wishing to access this funding should approach their ward Councillors.

**10. ANY OTHER ORAL OR WRITTEN ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

10.1 Karimah Bint Dawoud encouraged the group to attend the air pollution meeting which she had circulated details for earlier. Karimah also encouraged the Council to take a lead on environmental issues.

10.2 The next meeting will be on 22 June (AGM)

**Meeting ended 20:08**