**BVOAG Representatives response to the recent announcement on the departure of LB Hammersmith and Fulham from the Tri-borough arrangement**

Following the recent announcement that the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham is to pull out of the three borough arrangement, KCSC has asked for a response from BVOAG VCS representatives.

BVOAG VCS representatives were asked the key issues this announcement has raised which could potentially be discussed or answered at the next BVOAG meeting in May. Below are the following statements/questions:

**Council staffing arrangements**

We would like to understand how the withdrawal of LB H&F might impact on the current staffing structure particularly where contract managers are responsible for contracts across the three boroughs? Will RBKC seek to replace staff in circumstances where an existing officer may be newly employed or maintain employment with LB H& F alone? Could this result in staff shortages in LB Westminster and RBKC?

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**Relationships**

We have found in some instances that the funding arrangements across the three boroughs has harnessed better cross referrals and relationships amongst providers, enabling improvements in how services are delivered to residents. Does the council foresee how this could continue to work/be maintained as part of the exit strategy?

We imagine good working relationships have over time developed amongst the staff working across the three boroughs particularly within the process of commissioning services. Those relationships have also developed with the voluntary sector particularly at the Commissioner level. This may well mean in some circumstances starting again in building relationships with new commissioners. When will staffing arrangements become known and be made public?

**Services and funding opportunities**

There are concerns the departure of LB H&F may impact on the funding of voluntary organisations based in Kensington and Chelsea but deliver services in Hammersmith and Fulham. The current arrangement allows for greater funding opportunities and allows voluntary organisations based in K&C to widen their reach and impact into the surrounding boroughs. The new arrangement could potentially have a negative impact for some of those VCOs. Will managing the break up put additional pressure on existing RBKC budgets such as children and families and Adult Social Care?

**New opportunities**

We also see the new arrangement as an opportunity for RBKC to focus on how a smaller more aligned arrangement can bring benefits to the local community. This includes strong relationships with commissioners whose remit will have a more geographically defined focus. New approaches to commissioning which is more in tune with local relationships and local knowledge alongside what we would hope is faster decision making.

BVOAG representatives express the desire to work with our local council to build on how we can continue to address local need. BVOAG can and should be the place to have the dialogue with our Cabinet members and Senior officers on how the new two borough arrangement can be of maximum benefit to residents. It would be helpful to include this as a regular discussion item and area for drawing up follow up actions.