



Report from CEO of KCSC for BVOAG

15 September 2016

This report is written with the support of BVOAG representatives on behalf of the local voluntary and community sector which covers matters since the last BVOAG meeting.

Corporate grants

Representatives are pleased to see the council's continued commitment to funding the local voluntary and community sector and in particular recognising that continued grant funding will help to maintain a stable provision of local services. There has been some disappointment expressed that corporate grants seems to remain inaccessible for new applications that would like to receive the funding. However in general there is a real appreciation that the funding timescale is one plus one providing a real opportunity that services could potentially continue for 2 years.

Representatives would like to hear the council's thoughts on what they hope will be achieved through this renewed commitment.

Future of BVOAG

Having discussed the future of the BVOAG at our representative meeting, all reps want to express how much they value BVOAG as an essential mechanism for maintaining good communications and relationship development with the council. It is recognised that at time when there are less resources around thus greater pressure on time it is acceptable to reduce the meetings to 4 a year including the AGM instead of 5. The representatives want to make it known that whenever they are in other parts of London with other voluntary sector colleagues, the BVOAG as a route to on-going dialogue between the council and the voluntary sector is envied and so in not taking it for granted we are all keen to make it work for everyone.

Representatives would like to hear the council's response to this statement.

Post Brexit

Following the referendum results as representatives we do have concerns on what the implications could be at a local level. Not only because of the uncertainty Brexit may bring economically but also the social impact. We have seen a worrying increase in hate crime locally which was already on the increase prior to the Referendum and fear that now it will continue to increase unless we work together to combat bigotry and hate. There are possible ideas to explore around third party reporting and how local voluntary organisations can be that vital link in supporting people to report hate crime.

Advice agencies have also noticed a demand in requests for support from EEA nationals. Initially they were making phone/drop in enquiries about what Brexit would mean for them. Now they are enquiring about the process of applying for permanent residency. This currently has an application form about 85 pages long (although this may not all be applicable depending on activities) and requires proof of exercising treaty rights for the last 5 years. This level of work may increase overtime.

Review of the Advice Now Partnership

Following a review of the ANP (a partnership between 7 local advice agencies and KCSC) a report has been completed with a set of proposed delivery models that the partnership could consider for the future. The report is now on the CAB K&C's website if anyone would like to read it or if requested can be forwarded to you by Charles. The ANP will continue to meet and will consider the recommendations of the report going forward.

Shared Services

Unofficially the reps have heard that although the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham will not undo shared services with Westminster and RBKC, it will no longer be seeking to develop any future shared services/opportunities.

Does the council have any comments on this and what reassurance can be given about the future relationship with H&F and its impact on current shared services?

VCS Space

Since the last BVOAG meeting KCSC has met with Property and Corporate Services to discuss a possible workshop with the local voluntary and community sector to explore a physical hub space for the voluntary sector with a potential vision of sharing back office functions and creating flexible working space. The reps welcome this new development and look forward to what might emerge as a result.

Future VCS Funding

This item was raised at the last meeting as well as a question asked at the BVOAG annual meeting about the future plans for VCS funding across children, young people and families and adult social care. Whilst there is now some positive developments that funding streams are being rolled over until March 2017 there still remains the uncertainty of what happens beyond that time. Earlier rather than later consultation is what the VCS seeks in order to prepare for possible changes.

Is the council in a position to respond to this?

Youth Foundation

KCSC is working with John Lyons to facilitate meetings to look at the development of a Youth Foundation. Foundations are being set up in other surrounding boroughs supported by John Lyons and the intention has been mooted to set up a Foundation in Kensington and Chelsea. We do recognise that there may be some challenges in this borough that might not face other boroughs particularly if a Foundation exists already locally. This will need to be explored in-depth as we move forward.

Does the council have a view on this?

Elections

Elections for BVOAG reps takes place every two years with 2016 being the year elections are due. The process will begin in the autumn and by December's BVOAG meeting we should have the names of new representatives.

Moving on

The reps would like to say a big thank you to two long standing BVOAG reps who will be leaving their posts over the coming weeks/months. Charles Barber and Vicki Davies have been great representatives and valuable colleagues in the voluntary sector and both will be missed. We wish them both well as they move on to new ventures.

Angela Spence, KCSC