Report from CEO of KCSC for BVOAG



December 2015

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.

**Discussions on property**

Following a meeting with property it is unlikely that a working group will be set up to look at the longer term prospects for the voluntary and community sector. We would still like the topic to remain a live issue and discussions to continue to take place at BVOAG. Property issues will continue to play a big part in the future and security of voluntary sector services in the future therefore it is important to not lose sight of this at these meetings.

There is still an interest in the future plans for North Kensington Library and whether there is potential to explore a community hub approach. Are there any further plans confirmed for the library that we can be updated on at this point?

**BVOAG/Compact Implementation Group Review**

As we are entering into a new year we feel it is the right time to review BVOAG and for all members of the group to express what it means for them in terms of its role and contribution. This would be useful to review in terms of the relationship between the voluntary and statutory sector and how it works towards improving lives for local residents. The BVOAG is highly valued amongst the voluntary sector representatives and we want to ensure that it remains relevant and effective. A request to discuss this in the New Year would be welcome.

The Compact Implementation Group is also highly valued by the voluntary sector representatives that participate in the group. In the past it has been an important mechanism for discussion on issues of relevance that seek to improve an understanding between the statutory and voluntary sector and our ways of working. Membership of the group does fluctuate and at times has been very low in attendance. It would be helpful in the New Year to review the Compact Implementation Group, its purpose and membership and would welcome a discussion on this as a positive way forward.

**Rental Policy**

Following the Rental Policy consultation meeting in October, please can we have an update on how this has now been taken forward and if any concerns raised in consultation responses and at the meeting held in September will be looked at in any more detail.

**Gaps in funding payments**

We last raised the matter of late payments to the voluntary sector via the council’s new payment system in July. Feedback reveals that even though voluntary sector payments were prioritised there are instances where it is still taking months 4 months for payment to arrive in one case and 3 months and still waiting in another, also payment being made to the wrong organisation.

If organisations are fortunate enough to have enough reserves to manage cash flow problems can be averted but only short term. Is there any assurance on the likelihood that the situation will begin to improve in the near future?

**Refugee Crisis**

As voluntary sector representatives we wanted to thank the council for agreeing to adopt the policy to welcome refugees into the borough. Any opportunity to discuss with the council what this might mean for local voluntary sector services and the borough as a whole and what we could do to support refugees would be welcome in the future.

**Advice Sector**

The Advice Now Partnership is continuing to work together to look at the future of advice services and will update in 2016 on progress.

**Children and Young People**

Existing voluntary sector youth providers are pleased with the final recommendations taken by the borough for the majority of organisations to continue to receive funding during 2016/17 and that cuts to 2015/16 funding has been proportionate. We would like to thank the borough for this considered approach.

Youth providers will continue to work with commissioners in developing a future commissioning strategy.

Angela Spence

KCSC