Report from CEO of KCSC for BVOAG



July 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.

**The Compact**

KCSC is currently working with the Community Engagement team to begin the process of refreshing the Compact. The past few years since the last refresh has seen some changes in the context of a more challenging environment for both the voluntary and statutory sector as well as the introduction of the Social Value Act. We think that whilst the core principles of the Compact remain very much the same, we believe that issues such as commissioning processes, consultation/communication with the voluntary and community sector and voluntary and community sector independence needs to be revisited and a fresh commitment made between all parties on how we can adhere to good practice.

**Gaps in funding payments**

There has been concern expressed regarding late payments to the voluntary sector and the impact this could have or has had on the organisation. We are particularly concerned about the lack of communication on this issue which led to an increased and unnecessary volume of calls and emails to the council. The lack of communication on this, and the subsequent inability to make timely payments is a real threat to smaller organisations who have limited cash flow. This does raise the issue of what procedure can be put in place to ensure organisations are reassured that their organisation is not under threat due to a gap in funding payments from the council. We know that the situation will eventually improve but still does require some monitoring as organisations are still reporting that some payments have still not been received.

It is also important to take into account the impact this may have had on the delivery of services when organisations submit their monitoring to the council. There may have been some disruption to service delivery if services were dependent on receiving funds at the right time.

**Premises**

BVOAG representatives still believe there is no clear transparency on the future of the sector in relation to premises. We do not know how the sector will be affected in the future or how the council intends to address the challenges we continue to raise at these meetings. We hope that we can begin to look at solutions going forward rather than focussing on the issues.

**Advice**

BVOAG representatives have expressed concern with the way in which it has been proposed that the de-commissioned TMO Housing Benefit Advocacy work should be handed over to the CAB and WENAC without clear communications or a fuller understanding of the possible impact on existing services and finances or on the wider sector. We believe there is a better way to work with the voluntary and community sector, recognising that services can be delivered differently, and that there may be additional demand placed on the voluntary sector as a result of de commissioning a service.

In maintaining the spirit and key principles of the Compact we would seek to work with the council to explore how decisions such as these might be better informed.

**Older people**

BVOAG representatives want to express appreciation for the way in which Adult Social Care have taken a pragmatic and supportive approach with issuing voluntary sector with contracts until July 2017. This allows for some stability in the sector whilst we work with our Adult Social Care colleagues to address the future.

**The future**

As voluntary sector representatives we all agree that in changing times we are all required to adapt and change to meet new demands and challenges that face our local community. Recognising the financial constraints placed upon the council as we go through the next few years. It also highlights the opportunities for us to work more closely together in providing effective services with hopefully a longer and sustained impact for residents.

However we feel that there needs to be a deeper discussion with the council on the expectation it has of the voluntary and community sector in relation to the implementation of the Care Act, the Better Care Fund, Early Help and other such developments which rely on integrated working across sectors.

We agree as representatives that this is a debate that the sector also needs to have with itself and we will do so, but are keen to have this debate with our council colleagues.

In essence we would like to help shape this debate in a pro-active and responsive way rather in order to support both the local community and the demands on public funds instead of just reacting to new or re-designed council services or initiatives which does not provide us with the time to take a longer term strategic view, and services.

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KCSC