

## CEO Forum 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019

In October 2015, the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Cabinet agreed a report, "Developing Our Relationship With the Voluntary & Community Sector". The report set out an emerging new relationship between LBHF and the local voluntary sector, and agreed the following ambitions were agreed:

*To ensure our relationship with, and funding of, the voluntary and community sector supports the Council vision;*

*To develop our participatory culture, increase informal and formal volunteering, drive an impact volunteering campaign on social isolation and loneliness and, in line with our thinking on social value, reframe CSR to focus on skills exchange;*

*To support increased philanthropy, individual and collective giving, supporting community foundations and promoting crowd-funding through the H&F Hive;*

*To encourage cross-sector collaboration and drive efficiency and effectiveness by sharing capacity, assets and space;*

*To promote a real partnership between organisations and their users, where co-production becomes the norm and stakeholders of the voluntary and community sector are co-directing decision making;*

*To maximise investment, including support to access funding and promoting agreement/collaboration between funders to reduce wasted effort and time.*

*Avoiding duplication, we will support partners to deliver more together;*

*To encourage partnership within Hammersmith & Fulham's voluntary and community sector able to create coalitions, collaboration and joint commissioning;*

*To support H&F initiatives that seek to be agile in response to local needs and crisis, reflecting our commitment to community resilience; and*

*To promote social action, encouraging residents to actively engage with their neighbours and their communities that can create social capital and positive social change.*

Find the full report at:

<http://democracy.lbhf.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=116&MIId=6584&Ver=4>

### **CEO Forum Discussion**

Report author Ruth Redfern, Strategy & Communities lead for LBHF presented the report to representatives from over 40 community and voluntary sector organisations at the CEO Forum at Sobus' Dawes Road Hub.

### **Building relationships with and between the sector:**

- All agreed that building relationships and collaboration is key – but that LBHF cannot prescribe how this might be done.
- Positive experiences:
  - Advice Forum has helped organisations to build relationships.

- H&F Foodbank – work with other organisations to provide a wider range of support to clients.
- Age UK in other boroughs – established new and different relationship with the local authority through a more partnership style approach West London Zone – 4 contracts, topped up by National Lottery Fund – the work was driven by us – it encouraged and enabled conversations to take place between organisations
- Less positive experiences:
  - Soup4Lunch – can no longer access Sheltered Housing Schemes where their project has until now been delivered, as scheme managers are no longer site based. Little or no response from the new centralised service to enable the service to continue to operate from sheltered housing scheme, which is hampering the delivery and reach of the service.
  - Often seen that where larger providers (often not those based in the borough) are commissioned or funded to deliver a service – but when the funding ends, they leave and clients are left unsupported.
  - Seems to be an expectation that the community and voluntary sector will “step in”, but with little or no acknowledgement that groups need support and resources to operate and support additional residents. Particularly a concern in the development of social prescribing via Primary Care Networks.
- Bringing groups together – often see each other as competitors rather than collaborators. Positive example given of Disability organisations funded to bring groups together).
- Sustainability is important.
- How do we create a level playing field? Lots of smaller groups can't compete with larger organisations for contracts and grants, and formal coalitions and secure partnership arrangements can be time consuming and challenging to establish. It was acknowledged that there is nothing LBHF can do when other funders commission or fund organisations to deliver services locally.
- It is particularly difficult when funders focus on “innovation!”, when tried and tested is equally (if not more) important. LBHF certainly want local organisations (and an established local presence has been a criteria for 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Investment Fund for some time).
- Supporting collaboration: in terms of moving forward, there are a range of options for how the sector might arrange itself to focus and support collaboration – by service area, geographical basis, user group/communities basis etc.

### **Funders collaboration**

- For the most part, it was felt that funders encourage competition rather than collaboration.
- Whilst LBHF don't feel it is the council's role to lead the development of a shared approach by other funding bodies, it is something they would want to support. The idea of redirecting existing resources to support and facilitate collaboration might be able to be considered.
- Noted the successful approach of the K&C Foundation – it has funding contributions from the local authority, but acts as a broker with high net worth individuals, funders and companies. United in H&F is developing this same approach.

## **Crowd Funding:**

- One attendee raised an issue about SpaceHive – the organisation ran a number of fundraising activities and wanted to channel this money through SpaceHive, but it was subject to a fee. Donors unhappy that 100% of their donation had not gone straight to the project. If organisations are seeking to raise their own contributions to a project through SpaceHive, this needs to be clarified.
- Ruth noted that SpaceHive appear to be open to ideas – for example, looking at the system being able to be used for revenue funding.

## **Cross borough working**

- Noted that for some, working across borough boundaries can sometimes be problematic – existing organisations see us as “coming in to take over”, rather than acknowledging the service could well be meeting local needs, or supporting residents.
- Ambitions of some groups are local, but some operate on a regional and even national level. For example – Citizens’ Advice H&F is part of a national brand and seen as a national exemplar due to the partnership work done with H&F Community Law Centre, HF Foodbank and others. Such approaches are likely to attract inward investment.
- Some organisations work across 3 or more London boroughs, with each local authority focussed on their own borough – there is not enough collaboration between local authorities and their neighbours.
- Noted that legacy of Tri-Borough is still being felt – mapping exercise being done at LBHF to see where cross borough collaboration is in place and is effective.
- It was felt that the CCG and NHS are not fully committed to supporting the voluntary and community sector.

## **Building relationships with residents**

- Residents are engaged and supportive of local initiatives – Next Door is a good example – significant percentage of residents are signed up to this, and it is seen as an effective communication and engagement platform.
- Developing a participatory culture through volunteering – what could LBHF do to help and promote this? Some suggested annual event and awards scheme to celebrate volunteering. HF Volunteer Centre noted that such programmes/events are extremely time consuming and costly to organise.

## **LBHF**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Investment Fund – currently ring-fenced, but no uplift (as per all LBHF budgets).
- LBHF may need to reorganise what is funded to take into consideration the overall funding that is available.
- Co-production seen as very important. LBHF would want to see evidence of user and resident involvement in your organisation and services.
- Noted that with a high level of staff turnover and the high use of interims in key positions, the ability for organisations to keep in communication with council departments, services and the right officers is becoming increasingly difficult. It

would be helpful to have a directory of council services and contacts. This was something the council previously provided, and was an extremely useful resource.

- It was suggested that equality and diversity and environmentally sound services/approaches could be stronger in the ambition document.
- KPI approach is often unhelpful and not meaningful in terms of the service provided or the difference the service makes for residents. KPIs based on principles and outcomes is sought – creating a mature relationship between funders and organisations – flexible and able to change and develop.

### **Communication:**

- Platform for communications to be set up by Sobus. Facebook, or Work Place.
- Noted that Kensington & Chelsea social Council facilitate connections between community and voluntary organisations and local businesses.
- Local newsletter sought by many orgs to reach local residents. H&F does not have a newsletter or residents' publication – but a weekly email bulletin is sent out to residents. <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/pages/say-it>

### **Volunteering**

- Dominic Pinkney, CEO of Hammersmith & Fulham Volunteer Centre briefly outlined a new volunteering strategy that is being developed in partnership between the community & voluntary sector, LBHF and residents. Lots of ideas explored at a “Thinkathon” earlier this year. The models of volunteering to be developed are:
  - Formal volunteering
  - Informal volunteering
  - Impact volunteering – with an initial focus on addressing loneliness & isolation
  - Corporate Social Responsibility
- A new approach of “participation” is being developed – encouraging people to give their time to be active in delivering meaningful local change.
- It was asked how volunteering is celebrated in the borough. This is done in a range of ways – individual organisations have events (sometimes part of AGMs) to thank and recognise their volunteers. Some articles in LBHF online bulletins which include celebrating local volunteers – e.g. those who have volunteered extensively or over many years.
- It was noted that volunteers are sometimes mixed up with carers – different roles entirely. In this regard, volunteering means activities outside your home to benefit residents or the community outside your family or social circle.
- A few comments made during the meeting on Corporate Volunteering – Dominic noted that Works4U has had some success with this.

### **Next steps**

- More discussions needed – Sobus to organise follow up meetings and facilitate input from LBHF.
- Facebook/Workspace pages to be set up (by Sobus)

- Suggested that early work needs to include identifying potential areas of work, then invite groups to join/form working groups
- Contribute your ideas and thoughts through Facebook or by email to [admin@sobus.org.uk](mailto:admin@sobus.org.uk) for sharing
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Investment Fund – LBHF will need to start to engage/consult on this in early 2020 in order to schedule the full process to fit with the existing funding term. Local groups need to be prepared to engage and contribute to this. Noted that 3 year funding would be welcome – but a 10 year funding “club” would be brilliant! (Action for LBHF)
- Look at how the sector can be supported to develop relationships with NHS and school (Sobus to raise through ICP and PCNs)
- Philanthropy and CSR – always seems to be on their terms of the companies/businesses, and not informed by the voluntary and community sector. Would like to explore how we might influence this. (possible workstream to explore)
- Use of Community Levy to be further clarified (action LBHF)
- Noted that LBHF do not have a person that can look at external funding that might be sought – it would be beneficial to make sure we include all potential funding sources that could be realised locally.

#### **Other**

- Seeking trustees – Sobus and H&F Volunteer Centre may be able to help by promoting volunteering opportunities.
- Information requested on Social Prescribing and Primary Care Networks – Sobus to provide.