

**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA  
BOROUGH/VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS ADVISORY GROUP**

**12 JUNE 2007**

**REPORT BY THE TOWN CLERK AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
ISSUES RAISED BY THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

This report sets out a number of areas that the voluntary sector representatives wish to discuss.

**FOR DISCUSSION**

- 1. Current Status of Selection of new provider to manage the Tabernacle**
  - 1.1 Members of the Advisory Group will recall that at the end of 2006 the Council sought providers to manage the Tabernacle in North Kensington. In the interim period the centre has been kept open on a limited basis by the Council. Following the selection process Members have now agreed a new provider. At the time of writing, final negotiations are taking place prior to finalising a Key Decision Report. It is not possible to name the provider at this stage. An announcement will be made shortly and the new provider is expected to take over the management of the Centre later in the year.
  
- 2. Changing Office of National Statistics (ONS) population statistics and resulting impact on various Government grants**
  - 2.1 Members of the Advisory Group will have noted various media stories concerning the Leader of the Council, with others, formally raising the issue of changing ONS population figures. The new figures have little relationship to the demand for services within the Royal Borough and do not appear to reflect, in particular, the transitory population of migrants who may not stay long but do use services provided by both the Council and various voluntary organisations.
  - 2.2 Many voluntary organisations share the Council's concern regarding the relationships between Central Government statistics and funding allocations to the Borough.

2.3 There may be scope for co-ordinated or joint representations or lobbying on this matter. At the Advisory Group the voluntary sector has asked how it may work with the Council in taking forward this issue.

### **3. Commissioning and Grants from 2008/9**

2.1 At the previous meeting of the Advisory Group a very helpful discussion took place about commissioning from the voluntary sector.

2.2 On 21 May 2007 all Business Groups involved in funding voluntary organisations participated in a half day series of workshops exploring issues, concerns and possible plans. This was one in a series of events being held to consult with the voluntary sector to design the programme.

2.3 Attached as appendix one is a discussion paper for consideration by the Advisory Group. We are in the middle of the consultation process. The paper is a summary of the several conversations and workshops which took place on that day and of the situation at the time of writing. Further information should be available at the meeting.

2.4 At the Advisory Group the voluntary sector is asked to comment on any issues they wish to explore in greater depth.

**FOR DISCUSSION**

**DEREK MYERS**

**TOWN CLERK AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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**Background papers used in the preparation of this report:** none

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **COMMISSIONING & GRANTS 2008/09 – THE ON-GOING CONSULTATION PROCESS**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 We are in the midst of the consultation process which formally started in March 2007 at the last Advisory Group meeting and will run until July 2007. This is not a set piece consultation exercise – with statement, responses and resolution. It is rather a more fluid and interactive process. Adult Social Care and Family and Children’s Services, the two business groups planning changes to how they fund services delivered in whole or in part through voluntary organisations, are talking with those organisations at different points as they develop their commissioning procedures for 2008/09. This is through events such as the 21 May workshops or direct dialogues with individual organisations.
- 1.2 The consultation process is identifying useful information from the point of view of the Council’s officers and serious questions to which they are attempting to find answers or solutions. At the time of writing officers are still working on these answers or solutions. What follows is more of a “situation report” based on the event on 21 May and on information supplied by the other business groups.

#### **2. Corporate Services**

- 2.1 Corporate Services is not planning to change from the traditional commissioning route and will continue to use the most recent grant application format in 2008/09. We consider that most of the services we fund and organisations we work with would be best served by this process.
- 2.2 Cabinet has approved awarding longer term funding to voluntary organisations where there is a case for so doing. Corporate Services will draft criteria on offering funding for two to three years and formally consult on this with the voluntary community sector.

#### **3. 21 May Workshops**

- 3.1 The three business groups hosted a half day set of workshops on 21 May for the voluntary and community sector to discuss the process of developing new commissioning processes. There were two sets of workshops: by business groups (including Supporting People) and by themes (tendering, added value, procurement, evaluation). The event was very well attended and a compilation of the notes from the workshops will be sent to all attendees and those unable to attend.

3.2 The comments and questions raised in the workshops reflected differences in existing programmes and the range of voluntary organisations participating, but certain issues in common emerged which are summarised as follows.

- Definitions – widely circulated glossary of terms needed to reduce misunderstandings due to different use of the same term
- Outcomes – RBKC defined vs. deliverer defined, how to involve service users (new Individual Budgets programme), qualitative vs. quantitative
- Local vs. national or regional – Borough based groups competing against larger organisations from outside
- Extensive capacity building - to help with pre-tendering work, e.g. legal advice, needs of small and BME groups
- Criteria – how and what used and at which stages in the selection process
- Added value – how assessed, how to value niche organisations, assessing for several outcomes (finance, equality, activities)
- Grants – which and what will still be funded via the grants method
- Notification procedures – complicated advertising and tendering requirements that are very difficult for small organisations to keep track of and comply with.
- Costs/price – necessity to understand actual costs and difference between cost and price, how Full Cost Recovery could be applied.
- Timetables – for the design of the new processes.
- Monitoring & evaluation – having the systems and requirements relative to outcomes, proportion of time & resources required to do.
- Overall effects on small organisations – BME, niche service providers, traditional role of voluntary & community organisations to reach where the statutory organisations can't.

#### **4. Timetables**

4.1 Corporate Services will run a grants application process to a schedule similar to last year's, namely application packs available in early summer, with a deadline for submission in September and decisions announced in December. Should Adult Social Care and Family and Children's Services have elements they wish to fund via grants, we are willing to do a joint application process if they can provide the information on priorities within our schedule.

4.2 The Supporting People team already directly commissions services and will be publishing a procurement strategy June 2007.

4.3 Adult Social Care and Family and Children's Services are, at time of writing, are still finalising their timetables.