**ICNC Minutes 27 January 2016**

**In attendence:**

Mike Sherriff Voluntary Action Islington (Chair)

Ruth Hayes Islington Advice Alliance

Chris Taylor Voluntary Action Islington

Colin Adams Octopus Community Centres

Phill Watson Manor Gardens

Janan Aljabiri Islington Refugee Forum

Ken Kanu Help On Your Doorstep

Kate Kelly Creative Islington

Jean Smith Islington Children and Young People’s Voluntary Sector Forum

Roz Miller Islington Faiths Forum & Mental Health and Poverty Networking Forum

Jane Chambers Age UK Islington

Mark Brennan Islington Homelessness Network

Nicholas Watts Islington Environment Forum

Cllr. Asima Shaikh London Borough of Islington

John Muir London Borough of Islington

Martin Machray Islington CCG

Bob Green Stonewall

**Apologies:**

Despina Tsiakalou Islington BME Forum

John Mackinnon Sport Islington

**1. Discussion with Cllr. Asima Shaikh, Executive Member for Economic and Community Development**

Martin Machray, Islington CCG: opportunities for SMEs to access CCG funds to deliver wellbeing services.

* 1. Discussion with Cllr. Shaikh

Members discussed the newly opened VCS grants programme with AS. It was acknowledged that maintaining the budget for the programme at the 2011 level is a very positive move, as is the retention of a grant programme in a funding environment that increasingly favours commissioning. AS advised that the council had wanted to give political support to the value of grants and the provision of core funding to the voluntary and community sector (VCS).

Members were told that to accommodate budget cuts, the council is focusing on preventative work in the interest of making longer term savings. This focus is reflected in the VCS grants programme. The council has prioritised the VCS, children’s services, mental health and adult social care, and hopes to cope with budget pressures through, e.g. fewer waste collections and reduced park maintenance.

It was noted that the council’s position on business rates, the revenue from which is to take over from central government grant as the major funding source for local authorities, is yet to be decided, as the government has yet to clarify the detail of how the change is to be implemented.

A commitment was made to compile answers to relevant questions as an FAQ published on the council website.

The question was raised whether the Compact commitment to three months notice for organisations that cease to receive funding from the council applies to organisations whose funding is reduced rather than stopped altogether. These organisations will still need to manage changes to services and/or staffing.

**Action:** JM to confirm that the Compact applies where funding is reduced rather than ended.

**Action:** CT to liaise with Chairs to create and share a clear structure for the agenda item ‘discussion with Cllr. Shaikh’ prior to the next meeting.

It was confirmed that the council remains open to funding groups working with refugees, though there isn’t a strand dedicated to such work in this grants programme.

* 1. Discussion with Martin Machray

Members moved on to talk about the potential for SME VCS groups to work with Islington CCG. MM disclosed that the CCG has over £1million invested in the VCS, and that this is mostly through small-scale funding agreements. The CCG is able to simplify commissioning procedures when allocating small amounts of money. It does not currently give grants, but will take account of new NHS guidance for grant giving and will consult with ICN and other partners on including a grant programme as part of the new CCG strategy. It is envisaged that the CCG will use the Community Chest model to administer any grants fund. MM warned, though, that the overall amount of money available will continue to diminish due to the way that funds are allocated through the NHS: Islington has a relatively young population, which means that the local CCG receives proportionately less money than many others.

It was advised that the CCG aims to reduce the proportion of money going to hospitals as crisis care is more costly than preventative care. It is also hoped that GPs can link with other services, as many of their patients’ problems are not only, or initially, medical: either by bringing services into GP practices, or by GPs going to other services. It is recognised that the VCS can help in both these areas.

MM acknowledged that one large provider doesn’t give best value and that the CCG is keen to get large organisations working with smaller ones. There is scope for much more such partnership work and the desire for it has been written in to some contracts.

It was suggested that the most vulnerable struggle to access mainstream services and that medical practitioners could address this by engaging with them at VCS services. Members were encouraged to approach senior medical staff directly to kick-start such initiatives.

**2. Previous minutes and matters arising**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

**3. ICN Update**

Relevant items were discussed elsewhere in the agenda.

**4. Safer Neighbourhood Board**

The priority for the SNB remains youth violence and young people, and it was reported that at the most recent SNB meeting that the overriding issue for members was the lack of youth provision and the resulting increased risk of anti-social behaviour. The SNB is concentrating on its function to hold the police to account and its questions on stop and search arrest rates and proportionality have contributed to local police focusing such activity on finding knives rather than drugs and introducing body cameras. There will be a crime and safety summit on the 5 March with the theme of youth crime and the role of the community in addressing it. The SNB wants to: invite police representatives to more community events to improve engagement; and to help re-invigorate Neighbourhood Watch schemes. It was noted that given the SNB’s current focus, its work should be coordinated with that of the ICYPVSF.

**5. Potential for an Islington LGBT network – Bob Green**

BG advised of some possible models for a forum and indicated that he had been in touch with other Islington based but regional LGBT organisations about this issue. It was acknowledged that the work of LGBT focused organisations overlaps with that of the wider VCS, with, for example, poverty increasingly becoming an issue for LGBT communities. As there is currently little resource to support an LGBT network, it was thought that more should be found out about the needs of the local LGBT community, so as to ascertain if a formal network might be a useful response.

**Action:** through continuing discussion between BG & CT, CT to identify a co-optee to bring an LGBT perspective to ICN; and to initiate informal networking between local LGBT groups with that co-optee as a focus.

**6. Community Chest update**

The Community Chest Panel had not met since the last ICN meeting.

**7. Voluntary Sector Conference**

Members heard that the conference will take place on the 7 July, again hosted by London Metropolitan University. Basing the theme around the implication of the changes to Local Authority funding and to changes in social housing provision was suggested. The creative, and often unforeseen, responses of people to significant policy changes was considered.

**Action:** CT to arrange a first meeting of the conference working group, whose members were agreed as CT, RH, KK, and MB.

**Action:** CT to invite Jeremy Corbyn.

**8. Forums Feedback**

IHF – The rough sleeper count took place but is to be reviewed. It is a snapshot of rough sleepers on a single night. However, hidden homelessness is estimated at 400,000 people in London and is growing.

IAA – Islington Law Centre will be bidding for the LBI advice grant strand. ILC is also part of a BLF bid with IPR and HOYD to help people in crisis. The Migrants Law project won a case for two young people who have been granted the right to join their families in the UK. The government is appealing the decision. The commissioners undertaking the Labour Legal Aid review have been announced and RH is encouraging them to speak to people directly as there are possible political implications for organisations that provide testimony. It is hoped that the lack of Legal Aid for children and domestic violence victims can be successfully challenged. Some money has been found to retain the Welfare Benefits Advisors Forum.

JC – The new Age UK leaflet was shared. The new carers centre is now open at Manor Gardens. The Locality Navigators can now take referrals from VCS staff, as well as GPs, for clients with long term physical and mental health problems. The Realising the Value project will run from Feb to Sep and aims to show ways of measuring outcomes of health and social care work with adults. It is intended to pilot the approach with partners, so interested organisations are invited to contact JC.

CI – Creative Islington has an ongoing programme of events and is working on sustainability and business planning to ensure its survival. Funding for the Education Portal ends in March but it is hoped the service will continue.

ICYPVSF – The Forum is financially secure. It is working on finding out the details of the £500k fund that LBI has announced for youth work. The Forum wants to collaborate with and support other groups and invites others to approach it with ideas. The Forum will have a new Chair by April. Speeches from the November Women's Conference are available on Youtube and the banners produced for it, showcasing inspiring local women, are available for general use.

**Action:** CT to broadcast JS’s offer to share her experience of being part of commissioning panels to the ICN.

PW – Manor Gardens and All Change Arts are putting on an International Women's Day event at Islington Assembly Hall on the 7 March. A street party will be held at Manor Gardens on 9 July and stalls and entertainment are desired.

VAI – A meeting has been arranged with the Operational Research Society to broker pro bono work for the local VCS. A speed networking event to facilitate pro bono relationships between SME private sector businesses and SME VCS groups will take place on 3 March. MS will be moving on from VAI.

**9. AOB; future meetings**

Members considered the agenda for the next meeting with AS. It was thought that some initial discussion could be had about how LBI and the local voluntary sector can work together to spot gaps in LBI mental health provision due to reduced funding, and how they can work systematically to ensure the VCS can cope with the need displaced onto it.

* Wednesday 2 March 2016; 10.00 – 12.00; Cllr. Shaikh
* Wednesday 6 April 2016; 13.30 – 15.30
* Wednesday 25 May 2016; 13.30 – 15.30; Cllr. Shaikh