



MINUTES OF THE EQUALITIES COMMITTEE **Tuesday 2 May 2017 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor McLennan (Chair), Councillor Davidson (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Harrison and Thomas

ABSENT: Councillor Mashari

1. Apologies for absence (if any)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed the Committee that Councillor Mashari had been delayed.

2. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of Interests made by Members.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 20 February 2017, be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising (if any)

None.

5. Deputations (if any)

None.

6. Brent Dementia Peer Support Project (verbal update)

Danny Maher (Chief Executive Officer, Ashford Place) gave Members a verbal update about services provided to the community as part of The Dementia Peer Support Project. He explained that the project had been commissioned in September 2016 and it had been delivered jointly by Community Action on Dementia and Ashford Place with the aim to make Brent a Dementia-friendly borough.

Mr Maher highlighted that the approach taken had been different from previous similar services as the project was client-led which could be proved by the fact that two years had been spent talking to people living with Dementia to collect information about their perceptions, views, services and support systems. It emerged that people affected by the condition wanted to have support and stay away from institutions for as long as possible.

People living with Dementia had been recruited to design services for other people affected by the condition and ten people affected by Dementia were co-acting as peers for other people. Mr Maher said the project had been launched by people

living with Dementia and he informed the Committee that there were plans to open ten new Dementia cafes in Brent, which would provide opportunities for people affected by the condition at a very little cost.

Members of the Committee thanked Mr Maher for the verbal update and expressed their support to The Dementia Peer Support Project. Questions raised related to potential sharing of information and integration with other services to ensure a holistic approach, where the individual would be put in the centre of service provision, and the outcomes for residents. Mr Maher explained that people affected by Dementia had had long conversations with commissioners and the Social Isolation in Brent Initiative (SIBI) had been identified as the best vehicle to deliver the service in a holistic way. In terms of outcomes, the Committee heard that people's confidence and knowledge about how to manage the condition had increased which made them feel in control and gave them an opportunity to decide what they wanted to do, while pressure on medical and social services had decreased.

In response to Members' questions relating to the diversity profile of people suffering from Dementia and the engagement of people affected by the changes to the benefit system, Mr Maher explained that Dementia affected all parts of the community. He spoke about the negative stereotypes associated with the condition in some communities and cultures, and emphasised that the project was aimed at capacity-building as it helped people to find out more about resources and services available to them. In terms of benefit system changes, Mr Maher said that it was unlikely for people affected by the Benefit Cap to have been included in the project due to their age group being exempt from the Cap.

Members enquired whether Ashford Place would lobby for increased funding for The Dementia Peer Support Project and what a Dementia-friendly borough would look like. Mr Maher said that Ashford Place would like to continue with the project beyond the anticipated end and it could provide evidence to prove that the model worked so it would ask for additional funding. He explained that a Dementia-friendly borough would have improved signage (as at the Brent Civic Centre), audit of public buildings and slow lanes with trained cashiers would be provided at shops, while professionals know about the services delivered in the borough. Andrew Davies (Programme Manager, Community Wellbeing) added that service integration was important as this would facilitate the delivery of a broader package of care and would link services such as social care and mental health support. He highlighted that using peer support was helpful for breaking barriers within communities. Mr Davies and Mr Maher expressed a view that they would like to discuss the process of designing a Dementia-friendly borough with the Committee as the project progressed. In response to a question about training offered to staff, Althea Loderick (Strategic Director, Resources) explained that Customer Services (including library staff) and Social Care staff were aware of Dementia, but she acknowledged that more could be done to promote this awareness to anyone who may interact with a member of the public affected by the condition.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The Brent Dementia Peer Support Project verbal update be noted; and

- (ii) A report on the outcome of the project be provided to the Committee in January 2018.

Councillor Harrison entered the meeting during discussion of the above item at 7:28 pm.

7. Delivering the Next Phase of the Harlesden Community Hub

Fiona Kivett (Change Manager, Performance, Policy and Partnerships) delivered a presentation which provided Members with an update on the second phase of the community hub model in Harlesden. She reminded Members that the Harlesden Hub was a result of the Outcome Based Reviews (OBR) carried out in collaboration with a range of partners and residents and aimed to rethink some the challenges faced by Brent. Ms Kivett outlined the aims of the Hub which had been designed during the prototype phase in October 2016:

- The Hub had adopted a model that was owned and delivered by the community;
- The Hub was well-connected as relationships with various stakeholders were built;
- The Hub provided a joint assessment of need as residents had experienced difficulties navigating the system and duplication of assessment of need;
- The Hub had supported the process of building resilience as it ensures self-help and independence were key components to the service delivered.

Ms Kivett spoke about the environment at the Hub which allowed connections to be made and meaningful interactions to take place. This made it possible to identify and understand residents' problems rather than them having to fit a set of criteria in order to access a service. She drew Members' attention to Figure 2 on page 16 of the Agenda Pack which showed the broad range of organisations working in partnership at the Harlesden Hub. Ms Kivett explained that new partners had been added to the second phase of the project and she highlighted that the core group of organisations was shown in green, with partners delivering sessions and activities (both ad-hoc and regular) in blue.

In terms of feedback and observations, Ms Kivett commented on the approach; the offer / scheduling; attendance and publicity. She also outlined presenting needs based on the feedback from partner organisations who had interacted with residents at the Hub. The drop-in model and the patient approach were highlighted as in some cases residents had to visit the Hub more than once to resolve their enquiry. It had been decided to try to arrange specific sessions at certain times of the week as this would be easier for visitors to remember and for the team to promote. An issue identified was that some organisations were not honouring their commitments, while, on the positive side, a number of local people had approached the team, expressing desire to give something back to the community. The most frequent reasons why people visited the Harlesden Hub were related to Council Tax Support and benefits enquiries (including Housing Benefit). Footfall had varied and it had been hard to predict, with individual sessions being more popular than group ones. It had been identified that most people had complex needs, among which support with form filling and dealing with health, distance and language issues which had prevented them from visiting the Brent Civic Centre. Ms Kivett presented two case studies to the Committee – one related to a Housing Benefit enquiry and

one about an individual referred to Brent Works for support with securing employment.

Ms Kivett informed Members of the Committee that phase two of the Harlesden Hub had been running since March 2017 and it would run until the end of March 2018. She said that the team would then look at what was working well and what could be replicated in other areas of the Borough, with an aim to develop a community hub framework and a business case outlining the process and the resources required. The Committee heard that the third phase would be an on-going delivery of a community-led service.

In response to a question that related to the expansion of the model to other parts of the Borough, Ms Kivett said that Central Middlesex Hospital had been considered and community research had been carried out to determine a model that would be fit for purpose. In addition, the College of North West London had expressed an interest for a pop-up prototype at their Willesden campus.

Members of the Committee enquired about the main reasons why residents were reluctant to visit the Civic Centre and whether officers from other sites, such as the Civic Centre, could exchange practices with colleagues working at the Hub. Ms Kivett said that the team was keen to share the lessons learned and that arrangements had been made for Customer Services staff to work at the Hub for a day so they could take their learning back to their colleagues. However, Ms Kivett acknowledged the danger of replicating the Civic Centre and the One Stop Shop models and this was seconded by a Member of the Committee who said that community empowerment and involvement had to remain the drivers behind the Harlesden Hub. As far as reasons for not coming to the Civic Centre were concerned, physical ability, cost of travel and cultural barriers were seen as main deterrents.

A Member of the Committee asked if the issues mentioned in the case studies could not be dealt with at elected Members' surgeries and if it would be helpful to collaborate with Members. Ms Kivett said that this was a good suggestion and the Committee heard that councillors from the Harlesden ward had been holding their surgeries at the Harlesden Library.

RESOLVED that

- (i) The contents of the Delivering the Next Phase of the Harlesden Community Hub report, be noted; and
- (ii) An update on the outcomes from the second phase of the Harlesden Community Hub be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.

8. Draft 2017/18 Equality Strategy Action Plan

Andreyana Ivanova (the Council's Head of Equality) introduced the Draft 2017/18 Equality Strategy Action Plan. She informed Members that it followed the format of the 2016/2017 Equality Strategy Action Plan, with Equality Objectives (EOs) linked to Brent 2020. She explained how the action plan was structured and said that the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status would be added for the progress updates. Ms Ivanova pointed out that the action plan was informed by relevant recent research

and reports produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Women's Budget Group and Runnymede Trust. The draft plan also incorporated recommendations made by the Equalities Committee and feedback from various staff working groups and forums.

The Chair drew the Committee's attention to EO3 and asked Ms Ivanova if she had considered submitting an application for the Best 100 Race Employers, a new accreditation awarded by Business in the Community. Ms Ivanova said that she had this action in her work plan but didn't want to make a public commitment before she had reviewed the requirements for the submission and the feasibility to meet the tight deadline of 2 June 2017. She also commented on the Stonewell Workplace Equality Index (submission due September 2017) which illustrated well the Council's improvement on a yearly basis. The Committee also agreed that Dementia should be added to the 2017/18 Equality Strategy Action Plan.

A Member of the Committee asked a question that related to staff surveys that used to be conducted. Mildred Phillips (Head of Employee Services) responded that a 'mini' survey had been carried out in 2012 and no surveys had been carried until the Your Voice 2016 Equality Analysis. Members of the Committee enquired about the feedback from the Your Voice 2016 survey and Ms Andreyana Ivanova advised that from her recollection the Committee had received a presentation on this item in one of the previous meetings. She agreed to double check and forward the paper to the Committee via an email.

The Committee also enquired about the progress of the Aspire Leadership and Development programme that was launched in March 2016. Mildred Phillips who attended on behalf of David Veale, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, responded that the first cohort had just completed it. It was aimed at officers ranging from PO1 to PO8 levels and mixed feedback had been received, particularly in relation to the quality of some of the tutors. Ms Phillips explained that the external provider delivering the sessions had been changed.

RESOLVED that

- (i) The contents of Draft 2017/18 Equality Strategy Action Plan be noted;
- (ii) A progress update on the Aspire Leadership and Development programme be provided to the next meeting of the Equalities Committee; and
- (iii) A progress update on the work carried out following the Your Voice 2016 survey be provided to the next meeting of the Equalities Committee;

9. Progress update on the work with Eastern European communities in Brent (verbal update)

Andreyana Ivanova (the Council's Head of Equality) provided a verbal update on the progress of the work undertaken with Eastern European communities living in Brent. She informed Members that the Eastern European Fair on 17 June 2017 would take place at Sudbury Primary School. She explained that the event planning had been supported by the recently established network of local Eastern European organisations which had grown by 11 members since the initial roundtable meeting.

The Committee heard that, as part of this network, the partners had had the opportunity to learn about grants and capacity building, while Brent had been able to get about a better understanding of the needs of these organisations and their service users, and to map out what services they offer locally.

The Chair shared her reflections from the meeting with the Romanian Ambassador which had been hosted by the Mayor (Councillor Ahmed). She emphasised the importance of noting how important Eastern European communities were as well as the fact that the Council's door was open to them.

Councillor Davidson expressed concern that he had not been invited to meet the Romanian Ambassador and requested to be given the same contact details of organisations and individuals as provided to the Chair and other elected Members. He expressed his desire to attend the event on 17 June 2017 and he said that he was willing to invite Polish faith groups and Romanian community groups. The Chair apologised for not inviting Councillor Davidson and stated that she would ensure all Committee Members would be invited to future relevant meetings. Althea Loderick (Strategic Director, Resources) clarified that the Mayor of Brent had hosted the Romanian Ambassador visit and it had not been a public meeting. It was agreed that Councillors McLennan and Davidson would jointly host the event on 17 June 2017 and all elected Members would be invited to attend.

RESOLVED that

- (i) The verbal update on the work with Eastern European communities in Brent be noted; and
- (ii) A progress report to be provided to the autumn meeting of the Committee.

10. Any other urgent business

There was no other urgent business.

11. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Equalities Committee would be confirmed at the Annual Council Meeting on 17 May 2017.

The meeting closed at 8.21 pm

COUNCILLOR MARGARET MCLENNAN
Chair