



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 03 April 2019

REPORT OF: Assistant Chief Executive, Policy & Performance; and
Assistant Chief Executive, Customers and Partnerships

SUBJECT: DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING – EQUALITY, COMMUNITY &
THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides the Committee with an overview of the work of the Chief Executive's Group on equality, community and voluntary sector, with specific focus on activity in the last 12 months and the key issues and programmes for the coming year.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT GOING TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.1 The Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees have requested that Directors provide an overview of the work of their Directorates, in recognition of the number of new Members on each Committee.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Committee reviews and notes the report and considers any areas where it would wish to see specific reports at future meetings.

4. DETAIL

Chief Executive

4.1 The Chief Executive, Paul Martin, is the designated statutory officer in the role of Head of Paid Service for the Council. As the Chief Executive he is responsible for the leadership and oversight of the strategic and general management of the Shared Staffing Arrangement (SSA). These strategic responsibilities include oversight of the Council's overall approach to promoting equality, its engagement with communities, and its relationship with the voluntary sector.

Equality

4.2 The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy & Performance) takes the

corporate lead on ensuring the Council complies with equality duties under the Equality Act 2010¹ and that the promotion of equality is a key feature of all Council activity and services. This is primarily achieved through advising members and staff on equality issues in service delivery, liaising with key stakeholders and carrying out Equality Impact Needs Assessments. This work is led by the Policy & Review team in the Assistant Chief Executive's division.

- 4.3 After the election in May 2018, an induction programme was scheduled for Members which included a mandatory session on equality, which was well attended. The training specifically focused on the Equality Act and the responsibilities it places on councils and how Members should take account of this in their roles. During the session Members were given advice on how they should scrutinise Equality Impact Needs Assessments.
- 4.4 In September 2018, the Council adopted a new corporate plan which provides a framework for its activity for the next 3 years. One of the four priorities of the plan is to become "A borough for all", which includes the objectives of making the borough accessible for everyone and promoting opportunity for under-represented groups.
- 4.5 Many of the actions in the plan have an equality dimension and progress against these actions will be reported bi-annually. Examples include promoting access to employment for disabled people, introducing name blind recruitment, improving reporting of hate crime and publishing a disability access guide to the borough.
- 4.6 At the more cross-cutting level the corporate plan made a commitment to ensuring equality and accessibility would be at the heart of the Council's decision making. This will be done by publishing Equality Impact Needs Assessments, using the scrutiny process to actively review them and consider equality issues, and engaging with the Equality Stakeholder Scrutiny Group.
- 4.7 Equality Impact Needs Assessments are a practical tool used by the Council to identify where a policy or service change risks having an impact on equality, or conversely, where there is an opportunity to promote equality. In 2018/19 EINAs were published alongside papers enabling more in-depth scrutiny of equality considerations both at Scrutiny Committee and at Cabinet. During 2018/19 14 EINAs were reviewed by Scrutiny and Cabinet. Some examples include the EINAs of the Public Space Protection Order around Rosslyn Road BPAS clinic, 2019/20 Council Tax setting, the injunction against unauthorised encampment and the SEND Transport policy. The introduction of the new committee system from the Annual Meeting in May 2019 will

¹ The Equality Act provides that it is illegal to discriminate against someone because of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. These are called "protected characteristics".

further strengthen the scrutiny of equality considerations by Members through ensuring that relevant decisions are taken in accessible committee meetings involving members from across the Council. The impact of the committee system from an equality perspective, in terms of scrutiny and participation in decision making, will be regularly reviewed.

- 4.8 Richmond's Equality Stakeholder Scrutiny Group (ESSG) is an independent group which is one of the channels available for the Council to engage with community groups and those with protected characteristics. ESSG is made up of representatives of a range of protected groups and aims to provide a collective voice for the needs and aspirations of protected groups in the borough, to help the Council hear and understand them in developing services. ESSG is supported by the Policy & Review team. Officers from across the Council are invited to attend ESSG and present evidence about equality issues in their service areas. ESSG met four times during 2018/19. The group reviewed numerous EINAs and received presentations and gave feedback on a range of service areas, for example on Mental health, and services for children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities. The Policy & Review team also responded to gaps in data identified by the ESSG for example, by producing an assessment of older BME residents needs and collating and summarising research on issues and barriers faced by the LGBTQ community.
- 4.9 The Policy & Review team have also provided advice and support to other parts of the Council in meeting their equality duties. Each directorate has a directorate equality group which the Policy & Review team attend to maintain oversight of equality issues. The team also work closely with HR who provide training on disability and equality awareness, to ensure that any emerging service issues or requirements are flagged.
- 4.10 The Council also provides support to Richmond's Interfaith Forum (IFF). The purpose of the forum is to promote mutual understanding and tolerance between faith and belief groups in and around the Borough, as well as providing a forum at which they can collectively discuss relevant matters with local agencies. During winter in both 2018 and 2019, IFF provided voluntary support for winter night shelters in the borough, run by Glass Door Homeless Charity. In November 2018, the Policy & Review team supported the IFF to hold its first interfaith week dialogue event.
- 4.11 In January 2019 the Policy & Review team worked with Richmond Synagogue to hold a commemorative event on Holocaust Memorial Day. This followed the Council having adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of anti-Semitism in November 2018.
- 4.12 In July 2018 the Council raised the Rainbow Flag to mark London Pride. The flag was raised by Cllr Ben Khosa alongside representatives from the staff LGBT Equality and Ally group. This marked the first time the flag has been raised at the Civic Centre.

- 4.13 Looking ahead to 2019/20, in addition to the ongoing routine work outlined above, the Council is also working with AccessAble on the development of a disability access guide to the borough and is in the process of getting stakeholder input on its development. The guide is due to launch in July 2019. The next round of community conversations will also have a specific conversation themed around disability.
- 4.14 Also underway is a refresh of the equality pages on the Council's data site, DataRich – itself completely relaunched last year. Needs assessments are being produced for each protected equality group. The aim is that these will be used by officers to help target services appropriately and identify equality impacts of proposed changes, but they could equally be used by voluntary or community groups to inform their work or support funding applications.

Voluntary Sector Partnerships and Community Engagement

- 4.14 The Assistant Chief Executive (Customer and Partnerships) takes the corporate lead on the Council's role in promoting a vibrant and sustainable voluntary and community sector. This is achieved through promoting a positive and collaborative relationship between the Council and the community and voluntary sector, building community and voluntary sector capacity and helping to strengthen wider partnerships with other stakeholders.

Community Engagement

- 4.15 Engaging with our communities is fundamental to all that we do as a Council and a new programme is being rolled out underpinned by a strategy that seeks to inform, involve and engage residents. As a part of the approach towards a 'localised' engagement programme, action has already been taken to ensure that engagement with residents in their local area is genuine, meaningful and ongoing. A separate paper is being considered at this Committee, therefore no update is included in this paper.

Voluntary Sector Partnerships

Civic Pride Fund

- 4.16 The fund is intended for local initiatives to help launch new ideas and develop projects to make a positive difference to our borough. Constituted organisations can apply for a grant of up to £5,000 and Individuals and informal groups can apply for a grant of up to £1,000. The fund operates as a rolling programme and applicants can apply at any time during the year.
- 4.17 Applications need to provide a robust case for funding and meet at least one of the five priorities:

1. A borough to be proud of – making public places more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive and building stronger communities
 2. Building capacity in our community – using the skills and talents of local people to benefit the local community
 3. Town centre initiatives (only projects that fall outside the scope and limited funding capacity of the Town Centre Opportunities Fund are eligible to apply)
 4. Sport initiatives that meet the priorities of the Strategic Principles for Sport and Fitness 2014-2018
- 4.18 The Civic Pride Fund supports organisations and individuals from across the borough and has funded 19 projects so far this year to the value of £76,721. A list is provided in Appendix 1.
- 4.19 The Civic Pride Fund priorities are currently being reviewed alongside the design of ward-based budgets (please see the report on the Community Engagement Programme elsewhere on this agenda).

Voluntary Sector Property Strategy and Community Buildings

- 4.20 The Council has several owned and leased properties which are occupied by local voluntary organisations, and from which they deliver a wide range of services as well as use as office space. Agreeing final leases and aligning these with commissioning arrangements has been problematic due to the varying circumstances of each organisation and property involved. The Council is therefore refreshing the voluntary sector property strategy so that it better reflects the current property landscape, voluntary sector and community property requirements and creates more parity across the borough.
- 4.21 The Council has been working closely with voluntary sector groups occupying buildings and helping them to achieve their aspirations for the use of the building. For example, the Council has facilitated a series of discussions on potential future improvements of the White House in Hampton and its offer to meet the needs of local people. This included co-ordinating a residents' survey in Autumn 2018 on behalf of the organisations involved in the White House. The Council has also supported organisations through the Community Fund (Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy) to develop their buildings so that they are fit for purpose and better able to meet the needs of local people. An example is the Council's commissioning relationship with ETNA who manage a community building in St Margaret's, and which houses various voluntary sector groups and provides activity space for a wide range of organisations. In 2018 ETNA led a successful fundraising campaign securing £40k from the London Mayor Awards and £20k from the local community to extend the building to offer a community café.

RCVS infrastructure and capacity building

- 4.22 The Council commissioned Richmond CVS in a partnership with RHACC to deliver three contracted services. Each contract was for three years 4 January 2016 - 3 January 2019 with an option to extend for two years in annual increments.
1. Strategic leadership, representation and voice for the voluntary and community sector, providing a single point of contact to other specialist infrastructure services
 2. Capacity Building Services: developing skills and expertise within the voluntary and community sector
 3. Building capacity in voluntary organisations to recruit and retain volunteers and a volunteer matching service
- 4.23 A one-year extension of the three voluntary sector infrastructure contracts was approved from 4 January 2019 to 3 January 2020 to Richmond Council for Voluntary Service (Richmond CVS) with an estimated total annual value of up to £217,624.
- 4.24 Richmond CVS have met the majority of their outcomes and have been flexible and responded well to changing priorities from the Council such as the re-commissioning of the CILS service. They have provided a good level of support to commissioners and the voluntary sector such as with the CILS services and receive positive feedback from the attendees on their training courses. They have delivered 170 one-to-one advice sessions in 2018 against a target of 150, and supported organisations applying for funds which total £1 million in 2018. They have recently launched a new website which has greatly enhanced digital access for local organisations and volunteers.

Community Advice services and EU Nationals support

- 4.25 Community advice includes both Generalist and Specialist Advice and can relate to information, advice and guidance on rights, responsibilities, entitlements and duties in relation to Welfare Benefits, Debts and Financial problems, Housing, Employment, Immigration and related areas of law for those people who live, work, or study in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.
- 4.26 Citizens Advice Richmond (CAR) holds the contract for Generalist Advices Services in the borough. The current contract is for two years and ends on 1 April 2020 with the option to extend for a further two years, in yearly increments to 1 April 2022.
- 4.27 Richmond Aid holds the contract for the specialist service. The current contract is for two years and ends on 1 April 2020 with the option to extend for a further two years, in yearly increments to 1 April 2022
- 4.28 Citizens Advice Richmond has also been commissioned to run an advice service for EU Nationals in the borough (May 2018 – May 2019). Michael Haran was appointed as the EU Nationals Project Worker for

the service. The commissioned service provides information and advice to EU nationals living in Richmond to help them better understand their rights and responsibilities, in the lead up to Brexit.

- 4.29 The Project Worker is available for face-to-face appointments at all CAR's main advice centres including the Hampton Hill, Sheen, Barnes and Ham offices.
- 4.30 Information and advice is also offered to local employers concerned about the impact of Brexit on the rights of their staff who are EU nationals. General information and updates in electronic and paper formats have been produced by CAR to keep residents and employers up to date with developments as Brexit negotiations progress.
- 4.31 Four free public information events have been held to inform people about the latest developments and tell people what steps they can take to protect their future in the UK. Over 250 people have attended the information sessions and more are being planned. There is also information on the Citizen Advice Richmond website:
<https://www.citizensadvice-richmond.org/eu-citizens-brexit/>

Building relationships and communicating with the voluntary sector

- 4.32 The Voluntary Sector Partnerships Team works both internally and externally to communicate and build relationships with the Voluntary Sector. Email bulletins are sent out monthly to approximately 400 groups in the borough with Council and relevant sector news, as well as information on funding.
- 4.33 Quarterly Voluntary Sector Forum events are held, hosted by the Cabinet Member for Equality, Communities and the Voluntary Sector, Cllr Michael Wilson. The Forum is an open meeting attended by voluntary sector organisations, Council representatives and other stakeholders. It provides an opportunity to exchange information about areas of interest and promote good communication between the Council and local voluntary and community groups. There is an average attendance of between 50-60 organisations at each Forum.
- 4.34 Throughout the communication with the sector and internally with the Council the principles of the Compact are promoted. The Richmond upon Thames Compact sets out the way the Council and the voluntary sector have agreed to work together. It contains guidelines and principles to help us support good practice and effective working relationships.
- 4.35 In 2019 there will be a refresh and reaffirming of the Compact and promoting its use to partners.
www.richmond.gov.uk/relations_with_voluntary_sector

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Appendix 1

Civic Pride Fund Grants Awarded	Amount
104 Projects CIC	£5,000
Bounce Theatre	£4,910
Richmond Park FC	£5,000
Romany Wood-Robinson	£1,000
St Andrew's Church	£5,000
Legasee Educational Trust	£4,300
North St Margaret's Residents' Association	£2,150
ETNA Community Centre	£5,000
Combination Dance	£4,975
South West London Environment Network (SWLEN)	£4,844
TAG Youth Club	£4,881
Castelnau Community Centre	£500
The Exchange (St Mary's University)	£5,000
Friends of Richmond Green	£5,000
Richmond Environmental Information Centre	£3,721
Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE)	£5,000
KewTW9 Association	£450
DanceWest	£4,990
St Phillip and St James Church	£5,000
TOTAL	£76,721