

# Voluntary Sector Forum

23 February 2020, 13:00 – 14:30

Microsoft Teams

## *Notes of the meeting*

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### 1. Welcome

Cllr Michael Wilson (Cabinet Member for Equality, Communities and the Voluntary Sector) welcomed attendees to the Voluntary Sector Forum.

- Cllr Wilson gave his appreciation and thanks to the Voluntary Sector for all their hard work over the past several months, particularly as it is approaching a year since the Covid-19 pandemic began.
- Cllr Wilson gave an update on the Council's upcoming budget to be announced on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March.
- Purdah begins from the 22<sup>nd</sup> March to 6<sup>th</sup> May, whereby the Council's communications will be limited because of the upcoming Greater London Authority elections. All Covid-19 communications will remain in place.

### 2. Covid-19 key messages and update

Nidal Al Azawi (Public Health Lead, Richmond Council) provided an update on the latest information regarding Covid-19.

*See slides for details.*

- England's roadmap from central government is presented in 4 stages:
- **Stage 1:** 8<sup>th</sup> March - school and colleges will re-open and care home residents will be allowed one regular visitor. 29<sup>th</sup> March 2 households or up to 6 people can meet outside and outdoor sports are permitted.
- **Stage 2:** 12th April - reopening of non-essential shops. Outdoor hospitality allowed for households or up to 6 people. Funerals up to 30 people and Weddings with up to 15 people.
- **Stage 3:** 17th May - introduction of a limit of 30 people outdoors. Indoor hospitality, entertainment venues and indoor adult group sports will reopen. Larger performances and sporting events are allowed with limits.
- **Stage 4:** 21<sup>st</sup> June - It is hoped all legal limits on social contact can be removed.
- Richmond's Covid-19 cases have reduced considerably, including for people over the age of 60 and daily hospital admissions are falling. Deaths are continuing to rise but have shown a decrease. All local Covid-19 statistics can be found on the [Data Rich Website](#).
- **Vaccination programme:** top 4 priority groups should all be vaccinated by 8<sup>th</sup> March (70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable)
- **Shielding:** updated guidance shows an additional 1.7 million people have been asked to shield until 31<sup>st</sup> March.

- The Voluntary Sector is encouraged to stay up to date with the latest information: Latest [Covid-19 updates from the Council](#) and latest [Covid-19 updates from the Government](#). Promote individual action to follow HANDS, FACE, SPACE and stay at home if you have symptoms. Lateral Flow Testing is also available.

### **3. Covid-19 Champion Scheme**

Fenna Maynard (Senior Communications Officer, Richmond Council) introduced the Covid-19 Champion Scheme which the Council has recently launched.

*See slides for details.*

- Aims of the champions: create a diverse network of information sharers. Build trust and counter COVID-19 misinformation and provide feedback from the community. Help tell local COVID-19 stories (with videos, social media and word of mouth), to help deliver the vaccination programme.
- Regular updates for champions to share are provided by NHS partners e.g. myth-busting fact sheets, social media posts etc.
- The Council is looking to recruit more Covid-19 Champions to access 'hard to reach' communities: [www.richmond.gov.uk/covid\\_community\\_champions](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/covid_community_champions) or email [covidcommunitychampions@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:covidcommunitychampions@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk)

### **4. Richmond Climate Emergency Update**

Andrew Hagger (Policy and Review Manager, Richmond Council) provided an update on the progress of the climate emergency plan, since the Council declared a climate emergency in 2019.

*See slides for details.*

- In 2020 the Council implemented a decarbonisation strategy to reduce carbon emissions from Council buildings, secured over £1m for the Green Homes Grant Delivery Scheme, increased the number of electric vehicle charging points, started purchasing 100% renewable electricity, completed a food waste collection trial and achieved a B rating from the Carbon Disclosure Project.
- The refreshed climate 2021 Action Plan has just been put to committee last week.
- In 2021 the Council aims to: make all Council vehicles zero emission by 2030, support residents with installing more affordable solar panels, continue to identify areas that could be naturalised, start on the new Local Plan that will have the climate emergency as a key part and expand the food waste collection service.
- Council Climate Emergency information [https://www.richmond.gov.uk/climate\\_emergency](https://www.richmond.gov.uk/climate_emergency)

### **Green Homes Grant update**

Bethany Pepper (Policy and Programme Lead - Climate Change) provided an update on the recently introduced Green Homes Grant scheme (which is different to the Homes Grant Voucher scheme).

*See slides for details.*

- Funding is available through the scheme to support retrofitting 108 homes with energy efficiency and low carbon heating (e.g. heat pumps and solar thermal). Each home can receive up to £10,000 worth of improvements for those who meet the criteria.
- Eligibility: either an owner-occupier or live in private rented accommodation, household income must be under £30k per year and have a property EPC rating of D, E, F or G. Eligible residents are encouraged to apply sooner rather than later.
- Find out more: [greenhomesgrant@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:greenhomesgrant@richmond.gov.uk) or [www.richmond.gov.uk/green\\_homes\\_grant](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/green_homes_grant)

## 6. Strengthening the Arts in Richmond

Tim Corum (Arts Service Manager, Richmond Council) provided an overview of the Council's mission and new strategy to build community through creativity. A new team with a diverse set of skills has been introduced to facilitate this.

*See slides for details.*

- Aim to develop an ambitious arts programme that supports artists and reaches a larger diverse audience that responds to challenges e.g. ecological crisis, inequality and isolation.
- Focussing our work on children and young people, creating opportunities to share learning between generations.
- Facilitating a diverse and resilient arts ecology in the borough, developing partnerships, attracting inward investment.
- Objective to link arts with the post-Covid-19 recovery, expand volunteering and diversify the representation of the Council's arts collection.
- For further information: email [tim.corum@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:tim.corum@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk) or visit [www.Richmond.gov.uk/arts](http://www.Richmond.gov.uk/arts) and [www.oreanshousegallery.org](http://www.oreanshousegallery.org)

## 7. Carers' Strategy and Creating Carer Friendly Services

Melissa Wilks (CEO, Richmond Carers' Centre) and Steve Shaffelburg (Commissioning Manager, Richmond Council) provided an update on the current carers' services in the borough.

- Currently, there are 30,000 adults and 3,000 young carers in the borough with caring responsibilities.
- The Voluntary Sector should encourage a universal approach for carers, including carer friendly policies and ensuring staff and volunteers are 'carer aware'.
- Objective to have a carer representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board
- The Flu vaccine rollout saw an effective strategy to enable vaccines for carers. Work needs to be done to ensure carers are a priority group for the Covid-19 vaccines, particularly around identifying carers (not currently known). Further information should be forthcoming in the near future.
- Richmond Carers Strategy [https://www.richmond.gov.uk/richmond\\_carers\\_strategy](https://www.richmond.gov.uk/richmond_carers_strategy)
- COVID-19 Vaccination for Unpaid Carers: What Carers in Richmond need to know webinar – 10 March 11.30am-1.00pm - [COVID-19 Vaccination for Unpaid Carers: What Carers in Richmond need to know | Healthwatch Richmond](#)

## **8. Open Forum and Q&A**

- Simon Lawson (Citizens Advice Richmond) – DEFRA and DWP grants are still available to support local people in need, which are being administered by Citizens Advice Richmond and Richmond AID. Referrals via [www.citizensadvice-richmond.org/referral-page/](http://www.citizensadvice-richmond.org/referral-page/) or [advice@richmondaid.org.uk](mailto:advice@richmondaid.org.uk). Self-referrals also accepted.
- Citizens Advice are also offering one to one energy advice to help people save on their energy bills and access additional support.
- Census 2021 – digital-first census taking place on 21 March 2021. For any questions or concerns about the census please contact : [christopher.stokes16@field.census.gov.uk](mailto:christopher.stokes16@field.census.gov.uk)

## **9. Closing Remarks**

Cllr Wilson thanked participants for attending and asked them to share any feedback or suggestions for future meetings.