



Voluntary Action Forum

19th May 2021

Agenda

1. 11.00 Intro and welcome (Kevin)
2. 11.05 Membership (Donna)
3. 11.10 Why these things? (Kevin)
4. 11.15 Group Work (share on Padlet)
 - a. Each group take 4 items
 - b. Clarify, debate, decide
 - c. Anything missing?
5. 11.35 Feedback and discussion
6. 11.50 Prioritise (use Menti)
7. 11.55 Next steps – how to get involved (Donna)
8. 12.00 END

1. Re-open Emanuel Vincent Harris Trust for grass roots organisation grants

This is a grant-making trust that the council controls, which hasn't given out grants since 2010. Even small grant schemes are valued by small unfunded groups.

2. A Forum for dialogue and communication with policy makers

A regular VCS liaison forum existed until 2014 and was revived during the pandemic. A regular forum bring the sector together with the council and other public sector reps was valuable in the past and proved valuable again during the pandemic.

3. Adopt Social Value Act

Social Value is an important way for the sector to show it's worth beyond financial measures and, for instance, would help solve the 'rents' problem by moving away from a market model.

4. Include the VCS as an equal partner in the new Integrated Care System/Partnership at all levels

This is the biggest change to the NHS and social care since 1948 and acknowledges the sector's role in prevention and maintenance of health. The sector must therefore have a seat at the decision-making table and fair access to resources.

5. Look again at asset transfer and commit to a policy of Fair Rent/Fair Access to Civic Space

Access to affordable and free community space is under increasing pressure, yet is essential for a thriving civil society. Transferring assets to community control or at least having a fair access policy will benefit Camden's civil society.

6. Pledge to induct new staff and members about the role of VCS

Lack of knowledge and understanding of the VCS are key barriers to a healthy and productive partnership between the VCS and the public sector. VAC could run a regular session for those new to Camden.

7. Review commissioning , drop EU rules and return to majority grants

The move to commissioning and emphasis on price, rather than quality or social value has put the local VCS at a disadvantage. As an example, in Manchester they have created a joint framework <https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/publications/vcse-commissioning-framework-and-delivery-plan>

8. Either re-commit to the compact or negotiate a new 'terms of engagement' for LBC and VCS

The Camden compact was abandoned by public sector partners (<http://www.camdencompact.org.uk/>) but was a useful framework to set ground rules for how the VCS and public sector worked together - covering everything from consultation and involvement to meaningful partnership and joint priority setting.

9. Share council funding data with 360 Giving

The council holds a wealth of valuable funding data that could usefully be shared with 360 Giving as many other funders currently do.

10. Join with the sector to do bi-annual state of the sector survey.

A solid evidence framework will provide the firmest foundations for quantifying the worth, extent and impact of the VCS. Many areas undertake such a survey, usually with University and public sector partners.

11. Co-produce with the sector the next VCS Funding Strategy

The current funding arrangements for the sector - The 2016 VCS Investment Programme was a 7 year programme focussed on the Strategic Partners and a Community Impacts fund - is due to end in 2023. The new strategy should be co-produced with the sector.

12. Clarify who the sector liaises and communicates with at the council (see 2.)

Transparent and open structures are essential to creating trusted communications between the VCS and policy and decision-makers. The pandemic has shown how important it is to create and sustain those structures.

<https://padlet.com/info15870/iup02p5lpx1bkcbg>