



# Voluntary Action Forum

19<sup>th</sup> 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>