

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

FAIRNESS COMMISSION

6.00pm 16 MARCH 2016

THE RONUK HALL, PORTSLADE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present : Vic Rayner (Chair CEO, SITRA), Wednesday Croft (Youth Mayor); Martin Harris (Managing Director, Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company); Dr. Rhidian Hughes (CEO, Voluntary Organisations Disability Group); Sally Polanski (Chief Executive, Brighton & Hove Community Works); Bill Randall (Writer, Journalist and Housing Consultant); Dr. Katie Stead (GP and Clinical Lead for Public Health and for Locally Commissioned Services and Quality for Primary Care); Rachel Verdin (Organiser, GMB) and David Wolff (Director, Community University Partnership Programme).

Apologies: Ann Hickey (General Manager, East Sussex Credit Union); Imran Hussain (Director of Policy, Rights & Advocacy, Child Poverty Action Group); Dan Shelley (Vice Principal, Sussex Coast College Hastings)

PART ONE

1. EVIDENCE TO THE FAIRNESS COMMISSION 16 MARCH 2016

1a Introduction from the Chair

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting with a brief introduction to the purpose and scope of the Fairness Commission and an overview of the proceedings of the meeting. The Chair noted that the focus of this meeting would be Older People and Wellbeing.

2. Community Navigators

2.1 The Commission heard evidence from Bunty Bateman in relation to the work of Community Navigators. Ms Bateman explained that the Community Navigator role was a pilot scheme funded by Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group with the intention of improving well-being. Ms Bateman explained that she was based in a local Doctor's Surgery and GPs would refer patients to her, usually those suffering some form of anxiety. Ms Bateman explained that the programme would entail six 45 minute appointments where she would discuss various issues. Ms Bateman highlighted that these sessions helped to identify the person's problem and often, the presenting problem was often not the main issue to resolve.

2.2 Ms Bateman highlighted key areas and issues for older people in relation to her work as a Community Navigator:

- Transport was a key issue for older people. Whilst the public transport network in the city was very good, older people could often not use buses due to mobility issues;
- A positive step forward would be the introduction of a 'buddy' system not only to help people with mobility and accessibility issues to get around but also to build up confidence in attending events;
- Loneliness was a significant part of the wellbeing of older people and Ms Bateman suggested a poster detailing events and groups should be sent out with Council Tax statements. It was important this poster be drafted and approved by older people in order to foster interest;
- Ms Bateman observed that the prevention of isolation could offset chronic illness;
- Relationships rather than financial or health matters were of most importance for older people.

2.3 The Chair thanked Ms Bateman for providing evidence and for answering the questions of the Commissioners.

3. The Well Communities Framework

3.1 The Commission considered evidence from Gail Findlay, Director of Health Improvement, Institute for Health and Human Development. Ms Findlay provided information on the Well Communities Programme, a framework that enabled communities and local organisations to work together to improve health and wellbeing, reduce inequalities and build a stronger community. The framework not only provided a platform for funding or targeting of existing funding but also in integrating with other community projects. The Well Communities was in essence a partnership approach from the bottom level to top level. The Programme was long-term in its development approach with comprehensive evidence and evaluation based research running alongside. Ms Findlay highlighted that their research had indicated closer community as a the first priority of their research base and their results had also indicated a desire for events to be integrated community-wide rather than separated on into sub-sections on the basis of age. The Well Communities approach was a not a quick fix and was a systematic change to established ways of working and required wide-ranging partnership working between public organisations and communities.

3.2 The Chair thanked Ms Findlay for providing evidence and for answering the questions of the Commissioners.

4. Crawley- A Dementia Friendly City

4.1 The Commission considered evidence from Julie Kalsi of Crawley Dementia Alliance, Crawley Borough Council. Ms Kalsi explained that the Crawley Dementia Alliance had been selected for funding via the Prime Minister's Dementia Challenge Fund in 2012. Crawley Dementia Alliance was one of the first established in the country and now part of 220 nationwide. Crawley Dementia Alliance was a wide-ranging partnership and the formation had been assisted by a well-established Health & Wellbeing Partnership in the town in terms of seeking those partners. The Alliance consisted of, amongst others, GP's, the CCG, Public Health, voluntary organisations, Metrobus, Barclays Bank, Crawley Town Football Club and leisure providers. The partners in the Alliance all came

together to ensure that access to services and everyday life was made easier for those suffering with dementia and in supporting families. A key aspect to the work of the Alliance was to make services and activities 'dementia friendly' rather than 'dementia only' using subtle advertising and the principle of 'what worked for dementia worked for all'. This work entailed ensuring that existing events were made more suitable for sufferers including walking football, library services and men's sheds. The Dementia Alliance adopted the EAST Model: Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely when developing dementia friendly events and services. Ms Kalsi's recommendation to the Commissioners was to work in partnership and be creative.

4.2 The Chair thanked Ms Kalsi for providing evidence and answering the Commissioners questions.

5. Open Session

5.1 The Chair invited comment and observation from the public gallery and the following points were made:

- That the role of Community Navigators was previously undertaken by those professionally qualified and represented a cheaper method of delivering well-being and care services;
- If the council could not afford to pay for outreach work, the CCG should be obligated to through the Better Care Fund. This could include appointment of community nurses;
- If all funding opportunities had been exhausted or no longer existed, the Citizens Advice Bureau should be commissioned to deliver support functions as they represented a neutral, trustworthy administrative body;
- An urgent review of older people no longer claiming Council Tax Relief was necessary as it was possible many had not transitioned or were aware of the new system of claiming;
- That with 15,000 people living on their own in Brighton and Hove, it would be a three-year programme for Community Navigators to see every one of those people. Groups and suitable activities might be a better system but even basic support to foster these groups was currently lacking;
- Venues and bases to hold events were currently in short supply and something that required review;
- That Brighton & Hove City Council needed to continue traditional methods of communication as many older people were not digitally capable mostly due to physical disability or could because they could not afford digital devices;
- That movement in the city was very difficult and many people could not get to activities if they did not have transportation;
- That there were very few activities that captured the interest of elderly men.

6. GoodGym- an innovative approach to wellbeing

6.1 The Commission heard evidence from Alex Kenmure, Head of Business Development at GoodGym. Mr Kenmure explained that GoodGym was an organisation that helped people correlate fitness with volunteering work in the community. In relation to older people, this entailed creating a coach and runner style relationship of mutual benefit between young professionals and older people suffering loneliness or isolation.

GoodGym also undertook one-off missions: bigger tasks such as garden clearance undertaken by a larger number of runners. On an inter-personal level, the partnership helped breakdown common misconceptions of both younger and older generations as well as providing encouragement and support for more active engagement on both sides. Mr Kenmure explained that his involvement with GoodGym had helped changed his perception of older people and it was very important to be reminded of some of the challenges that old people face in terms of isolation and mobility issues. Mr Kenmure recommended to the Commissioners that real change for older people would work most effectively when a conversation was held as a community.

6.2 The Chair thanked Mr Kenmure for providing evidence and answering the Commissioners questions.

7. Libraries Service & Digital Inclusion

7.1 The Commission heard evidence from Sally McMahon, Head of Libraries at Brighton & Hove City Council. Ms McMahon presented information on older people and digital inclusion. Key points made in the evidence provided included:

- Digital Brighton & Hove that was a new partnership supported by Lottery Funding for delivering methods of sustainable digital inclusion. This was currently a 15 month pilot but it was hoped this would be extended through further funding;
- Local baseline survey work had recently been conducted to identify the priority demographic groups and geographical areas to target. Two of the four areas identified were older workers and older people;
- Key aspects of the pilot included signposting of services and digital champions programme;
- The purpose of the pilot was in providing support as more and more services became digital but also to help older people take advantage of other benefits available online such as purchasing consumer goods;
- Another benefit was in broadening the opportunity for increased communication with others;
- Libraries were a key part in providing facilities to increased digital inclusion as all were free and had computers with up to date software. Some library staff were also digital champions and could provide training;
- Libraries could also work as community hubs, hosting events, activities and meet ups for groups and individuals;
- Libraries also conducted outreach activities such as home delivery service whereby volunteers delivered and interacted with isolated people;

7.2 Ms McMahon recommended to the Commissioners that the library service was a free, easily accessible, existing service that could provide support in a number of areas.

7.3 The Chair thanked Ms McMahon for providing evidence and answering the Commissioners questions.

8. Open Session

8.1 The Chair invited comment and observation from the public gallery and the following points were made:

- That volunteers were well-trained, highly skilled, undertook a rigorous selection process and underwent screening tests to ensure they could enter people's homes;
- That libraries could facilitate a 'click and collect' service whereby library staff help residents, particularly older people, in identifying and purchasing goods online (where deals were often better) which were then delivered to the library for collection or to the person's house. This could be offset by a commission charge to the vendor or via a small charge by the library. In the long-term, this may give confidence to older people to understand and undertake the process themselves (via demonstration by staff), improving digital literacy;
- It was noted that the Fire Service currently owned software that created a database identifying where a vulnerable person resided in case of accident or emergency. It was suggested that Brighton & Hove City Council develop a voluntary register of people aged 60 and over that in turn could create a matrix that could be shared with partner organisations where consent to share that information was provided;
- Digital courses needed to be re-named or re-branded to not be specifically concerned with digital training but part of a social activity. Furthermore, research had shown that the classroom environment of courses was not viewed favourably, particularly by older people and should instead be held in community settings;
- The cost of setting up a wifi system in their homes was not affordable for many people. Community web connectivity was vitally important and needed to be a priority;

9. Chair's closing comments

9.1 The Chair thanked those who had attended the meeting to provide comment and members of the public for their contributions. By way of summary, the Chair made the following points:

- A core theme made in testimony was on communication and how that was most effectively delivered. This related not only to services older people required but also how to engage with other people and events;
- The right tools for communication were needed in terms of both inexpensive hardware and software but also venues and locations;
- The Well Communities testimony had provided a methodology for system change, a key consideration for the Commission and provided an evidence base;
- The financial environment was now very different and a shift in emphasis was required in how projects began and how they were sustained;
- That volunteer was a partnership and there was a benefit to the person giving up their time as much as the person they were volunteering for;
- Transport had arisen as one of the key messages in discussion on social isolation;
- Events and activities on offer should be engaging as well as something people felt they could contribute to.

The meeting concluded at 9.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of