

Minutes of a Meeting of the External Partnerships Select Committee held at Council Chamber, Surrey Heath House, Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3HD on 11 September 2018

+ Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans (Chairman)
- Cllr Max Nelson (Vice Chairman)

+ Cllr Bill Chapman	+ Cllr Robin Perry
- Cllr Ian Cullen	- Cllr Chris Pitt
+ Cllr Ruth Hutchinson	+ Cllr Nic Price
+ Cllr David Lewis	Cllr Wynne Price
+ Cllr Oliver Lewis	Cllr Joanne Potter
+ Cllr Jonathan Lytle	+ Cllr Darryl Ratiram
	- Cllr Ian Sams

+ Present
- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Cllr Valerie White (In place of Cllr Max Nelson)

Members in Attendance: Cllr Paul Deach and Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper

In attendance: Louise Livingston, Executive Head: Transformation
Mags Mercer, The Hope Hub
Solette Sheppardson

6/EP Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

7/EP Voluntary Support North Surrey

Solette Sheppardson, Chief Executive Officer, gave a presentation in respect of the work of Voluntary Support North Surrey.

Voluntary Support North Surrey (VSNS) was a support service for voluntary organisations in the North Surrey local authority areas. The charity provided services and assistance to the third sector including:

- Governance support; including training sessions for trustees.
- Advice to the third sector on business development, including support in the creation of business plans.
- Funding support: It was noted that VSNS provided charitable organisations with paid access to Idox Grant finder, which would otherwise cost local charities a significant license fee. The software allowed front-line service providers to search for local and national grants which were most suitable to their industry specific criteria.

- Most notably the organisation fuelled the third-sector by undertaking the recruitment, training, management and development of volunteers for charitable front-line services. It was noted that currently one in five people volunteered at least once a month and VSNS worked to engage the public in volunteering by representing the third sector at community events and by working to recruit volunteers from the Corporate Sector.

VSNS worked with organisations such as Clinical Commissioning Groups in order to facilitate social prescribing, which enabled vulnerable members of society to access the most appropriate services run by the third sector. VSNS and the Surrey Heath CCG had jointly secured just under £200,000 from the National Health and Wellbeing Fund towards the expansion of social prescribing provision in Surrey Heath. VSNS planned to use part of these additional funds to employ a social prescribing specialist at the Citizens' Advice Bureau – Camberley. It was acknowledged that, nationally, there had been a significant rise in demand for socially prescribed front-line services; exemplified by large volumes of referrals in the VSNS area. In particular demand had rocketed for socially prescribed provision for befriending services and services which dealt with dementia and long term illness support.

The Amigo project had been recently founded by VSNS and supported residents who were recovering from mental health problems. VSNS had worked with partners such as Catalyst to offer further recovery support, after initial the recovery had taken place. The project buddied up volunteers with clients, who acted as a 1-1 point of contact to discuss confidence levels and emotional wellbeing. It was acknowledged that out of 35 current volunteer buddies, 12 were based in Surrey Heath.

Arising from the Members' comments and questions the following points were noted:

- Efforts to encourage volunteering had led VSNS to concentrate resources on their website and social media channels. Furthermore static national levels of volunteers had forced VSNS to be more creative as per their digital content and had encouraged work with national partners such as Do-it.org.
- Despite concentration of publicity efforts on social media, it was acknowledged that volunteers were often recruited because they were individually asked. In addition it was noted that volunteering's value was often on a personal level and VSNS's attendance at events such as the Surrey Heath Show had created awareness of volunteering opportunities within the otherwise unengaged public.
- Surrey Heath GPs were proactive in referring their patients via social prescribing methods. GPs were advised of front-line services via VSNS liaison with the Surrey Heath CCG. Referrals from GPs were triaged by the Surrey Heath CCG via a single point of access. The process resulted in VSNS receiving and coordinating between 15-20 referrals per week.
- Digital training had acted as a significant strand to which VSNS had aimed to support charities within Surrey. It was noted that 45% of charities which VSNS supported, failed to have a digital strategy and a significant number of organisations did not have a donate button on their websites.

- VSNS had aimed to create strong relationships with corporate companies to nurture well-matched partnerships between charitable organisations and companies. This could facilitate one-off funding opportunities for frontline organisations and promote volunteering opportunities amongst corporate employees. It was also noted that VSNS worked to promote corporate social responsibility amongst the corporate sector. VSNS were also aiming to develop a training course for the charitable sector on how to effectively and efficiently apply to the corporate sector for sponsorship.
- VSNS aimed to stay based in Surrey Heath, despite increased office space rental costs. In addition, as a result of the expansion of the organisation and its services VSNS required more office space; which was also currently shared with Surrey Age Concern and Camberley Care. Members and officers acknowledged they would aim to help in regard to finding potential office space for the organisation where possible.

The Committee thanked Solette Sheppardson for her informative update.

8/EP The Hope Hub

Mags Mercer, Chief Operating Director, gave a presentation in respect of the work of the Hope Hub.

The Hope Hub was founded as an independent charitable incorporated organisation in December 2017, after the Churches Together Camberley group recognised there was need to respond to the findings of the Council's consultation on homeless services. The consultation highlighted the need for greater, more centralised homeless service provision within Surrey Heath. Those who had suffered relationship breakdown, redundancy, domestic abuse, addictions, evictions, mental health problems, were identified to be at particular risk. In addition it was underlined 495 young 'Care Leavers', were deemed to be at risk across Surrey.

The project focussed upon the assistance of homeless adults and those at risk of homelessness. The Hope Hub worked with various cooperating partners across Surrey Heath, whom collectively emphasised an urgent need for a new voluntary-sector organisation to provide homeless services provision.

The Hope Hub provided a pathway of services which guided clients from crisis management to long-term reintegration into society. The organisation's services could be divided up into two strands:

- Crisis Services – The project coordinated the provision of essential items to homeless people. Distributed items consisted of basic essentials such as food, toiletries and emergency items. Clients also received direct support to assist with accommodation, wellbeing, and any advocacy needs.
- Empowerment Services – The Hope Hub worked on a one to one basis to invest in homeless individuals, and to rehabilitate and integrate them into society. Services to empower individuals included services such as: money management and debt advice, CV writing, training and volunteering workshops and IT resources and support. Clients were also equipped with

frequent one to one meetings and support to enable constant reassessment of the steps to progress and the setting and evaluation of goals.

Since its opening, The Hope Hub had helped 43 clients and its services had been accessed a total of 414 times. The success of the Hope Hub since its opening was illustrated by various success stories such as the reconnection of families via the charity's mediation services, the successful transition of clients into temporary accommodation and successful advocacy allowing clients to gain access to their pension funds.

Looking forward, the charity would need to raise an additional £36,000 to maintain and extend the organisation's services for the rest of the year. The charity had planned the following expansion of their services for the near future:

- Provide a new service with Accent Housing to host a series of 'rent ready' workshops to prepare clients for living independently.
- Employ a Mental Health worker. It was noted that the vast majority of clients were not ready for existing, third sector mental health services such as the Amigo project.
- The founding of social enterprise schemes which supported clients gaining new skills in areas such as gardening and catering; which involved quick, tangible achievements.
- Helping 135 separate clients per year; including 35 with problems relating to debt.

Despite the fact many grants required applicant organisations to be running for over a year, the charity was continuing to work actively and agilely to apply for various local and national grants. In the near future, The Hope Hub would be featured in Tesco's groundwork project scheme. In addition the organisation had already been a featured charity of the Waitrose 'green token' scheme, which raised a total of £412 for the charity.

Arising from the Committee's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- As the charity had only been founded less than a year ago, it was appreciated the organisation still had a lot of work to do to raise its profile in the community. The Hope Hub planned to attend various events including training sessions on raising charities' profiles in the corporate sector.
- Even though it was appreciated that it was an accessible service, it was advised that The Hope Hub's clients did not tend to use the All Night Café on the London Road, Camberley. Several night café clients had been referred to The Hope Hub and several vulnerable adults had been rehoused as a result. It was noted there was further scope for cooperation with the two organisations in the future.
- 900 children were in Surrey County Council care and were historically at far greater risk of unemployment, addiction and mental health problems, as well as homelessness.

- The Hope Hub worked with Council officers to provide 'homeless kits' where appropriate. However it was noted due to storage problems the kits were allocated on an ad-hoc, individual basis.
- Even though other organisations within the Borough, which provided homeless provision, had a large cliental, which were based outside the borough, the majority of the Hope Hub's clients had genuine local connections within Surrey Heath.

The Committee thanked Mags Mercer for her informative presentation and noted it would like to see the organisation present to the committee again in the near future.

9/EP Boom Credit Union

Unfortunately the speaker from Boom Credit Union could not attend the meeting due to personal reasons. It was acknowledged the speaker wished to rearrange and present to the Committee in the future.

10/EP Committee Work Programme

The Committee received a report setting out its proposed work programme for the rest of the 2018/19 municipal year.

It was noted that some Members wished to see the Heathrow Noise Forum present to the Committee in the near future.

Chairman