

Voluntary Sector Forum

Thursday 10 December 2020, 13:00 – 15:00

Microsoft Teams

Notes of the meeting

1. Welcome

- Cllr Michael Wilson (Cabinet Member for Equality, Communities and the Voluntary Sector) welcomed attendees to the Voluntary Sector Forum
- Cllr Wilson said a big thank you from himself and on behalf of the Council to the Voluntary Sector for their efforts to support communities during the Covid-19 outbreak and their continued effort to help communities through the recovery.

2. Covid-19 key messages and updates

Kate Jennings (Senior Public Health Lead, Richmond Council) provided an update on the Covid-19 situation in the borough.

See slides for details.

- Full details of local Covid-19 statistics can be found on the [Data Rich Website](#).
- National guidance which may be helpful for the Voluntary Sector: risk assessments [HSE COVID risk Assessment Guide](#).
- Local testing sites booked through [national booking system](#).
- [Lateral Flow Testing](#) is now available locally, as Richmond has been selected as one of the Local Authorities to take part in a mass testing pilot.

3. Feedback from the Voluntary Sector Covid-19 Survey

Lea Siba (Senior Commissioning Manager - Prevention & Wellbeing - Universal Services, Richmond Council) provided a progress update on the Voluntary Sector Covid-19 survey.

See slides for details.

- Update on support:
 - A new mental health and emotional wellbeing group has been established.
 - Support is available through local providers for digital skills learning, helping to bridge the digital divide.
 - Unpaid carers are to be at the centre of the new Richmond Carers Strategy.
 - Free e-learning is available on safeguarding ([Adult Social Care eLearning](#)).
- Core objectives include:
 - re-opening commissioned services offering a face to face or hybrid service.
 - Working with commissioned services on service adaptations, developments and opportunities.

- To reflect in commissioning both the challenges of Covid-19 as well as the opportunities that have become apparent through innovations during the pandemic.

4. Proposed Voluntary Sector Property Strategy

Matt Maher (Head of Community and Partnerships, Richmond Council) outlined the Council's Proposed Voluntary Sector Property Strategy.

See slides for details.

- A wide range of Council owned community assets exists in the borough. A review is currently taking place to look at how to manage them more effectively to meet the needs of the local community.
- The aim is to actively partner and collaborate with the Voluntary Sector and grow investment in community assets.
- Consultation is planned for early 2021 to create a way for ongoing dialogue and a structure to feed in the Voluntary Sector's views, enabling more thriving and well used community spaces.

5. How Covid-19 could change ways of working

Paul Martin (Chief Executive, Richmond Council) presented on the changes to ways of working in the Council and Voluntary Sector looking at the benefits, drawbacks and opportunities.

See slides for details.

- Paul reiterated the Council's thanks to the Voluntary Sector and colleagues for their efforts throughout the 2020 pandemic.
- Drawing on the positives of adversity this can enable experimentation, innovation and progress, which has resulted in increased homeworking and greater use of data to help vulnerable people.
- Employers expect that 37% of their workforce will continue to work from home after the pandemic. Allowing people to have greater control over their work life balance and work environment.
- There are issues around not being able to switch off from work, anxiety and mental health.
- The Council see a future of putting greater emphasis on time together, less office space, co-working and flexible working spaces.

6. Open discussion on accommodation and property – what could this mean for Richmond?

Facilitated by Kathryn Williamson (Director, Richmond CVS) and Matt Maher (Head of Community and Partnerships, Richmond Council)

There will be further opportunities to provide comment on the proposed strategy in January, but if you have any comments or queries in the meantime around property in the borough, please contact Richmond Council on: voluntarysector@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk or Kathryn Williamson, Director, Richmond CVS on: action@richmond cvs.org.uk.

7. Funding for Food and Essentials

Simon Lawson (Chief Executive, Citizens Advice Richmond) provided an overview on the DEFRA funding for food and essentials being administered by Citizens Advice Richmond and Richmond Aid.

See slides for details.

8. COVID-19 Winter Support Schemes

Lucy Kourpas (Chief Operating and Finance Officer, Achieving for Children) outlined funding support available for families through the winter period for food and essentials.

See slides for details.

- £336,857 funding available for families. 80% of funding is allocated for families with children and 20% for households without children.
- The funding is for food and essential supplies with a 20% allocation of funding for other winter pressures. The scheme ends 31 March 2021.
- Voluntary Sector groups can apply for up to £10,000 to create smaller programmes that offers similar support to families. Community groups applying need to demonstrate strong management and experience of working with families.

https://richmond.gov.uk/winter_support_fund_information_for_voluntary_sector

9. Active Richmond Fund

Ben Smitton (Community Grants Officer, Richmond Council) provided an overview of the newly launched Active Richmond Fund which aims to encourage more active lifestyles for adults in the borough.

See slides for details.

- The Fund is linked to enriching the Social Prescribing and the cultural offer in Richmond through social, physical and cultural activities, that improve mental health, physical health and wellbeing.
- Two grant programmes available via a rolling programme: Micro Grants for up to £500 with a 2 to 4 week response time for a grant decision and Main Grants for up to £5,000 with a 6 to 8 week response time for a grant decision.
- Funding available to individuals, community groups, charities and commercial organisations.
- Apply online: www.richmond.gov.uk/Active_Richmond_Fund

10. Open Forum

EU Settled Status

Mike Haran (Citizens Advice Richmond) – outlined that they are delivering an outreach project to encourage EU citizens to apply for settled status. It is an open scheme with limited exceptions. The deadline for applying is 30 June 2021. More information can be found at:

<https://www.citizensadvice-richmond.org/eu-citizens-brexit/>

Census 2021

Chris Stokes (Census 2021) – highlighted the census is taking place on Sunday 21 March 2021.

- The census is digital this year. Chris wants to work with the Voluntary Sector to engage hard to reach communities and vulnerable people with completing the census.

- Please contact Chris for any questions or concerns about the census:
christopher.stokes16@field.census.gov.uk

NHS Integrated Care Systems

Bruno Meekings (Richmond CVS) outlined that the Voluntary Sector can feed their views into the NHS Integrated Care Systems survey before the 21 December 2020. For further information email:
brunom@richmond cvs.org.uk