

ONE BOROUGH

WEDNESDAY, 14 MARCH 2018

PRESENT: Karnail Pannu (Chairman) and Councillor Samantha Rayner (Vice- Chair), Sharon Bowden (Signal4Carers), Tamsin Phipps (Healthwatch), Paul Samuels (WAMCF/Mens Matters), Tim Walker (Mens Matters), Jane Corry (Norden Farm), Barbara Grossman (Maidenhead Synagogue), Anthony Lewis (SWAMI), Safia Mohammed (Adults & Community Learning), Tracy Muschamp (Family Friends), Samreen Aslam (NHS- PC), Jeffrey Pick (TVP), Eileen Denny (WAM Get Involved), Saghir Ahmed (Islamic Trust of Maidenhead), Lyn Mangisi (Radian Housing), Svetlana Zaychenko (Open World), Ila Gangotra (WAMCF).

Also in attendance: Major Richard Wright (Coldstream Guards) and Leigh Preston (Household Cavalry)

Officers: Louise Freeth (Head of Revenue and Benefits), Lin Ferguson (Dept Director of AFC), Sarah Stevens (Trading Standards), Jacqui Hurd (Head of Library and Resident Services), Harjit Hunjan (Community Partnerships Manager), Debra Beasley (Community Project Partnerships Officer), Nabihah Hassan-Farooq (Clerk).

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves. The Chairman introduced Major Richard Wright who was the Community Engagement Officer for the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards at the Victoria Barracks where the meeting was being held. He outlined the good work being carried out by the guards and welcomed the group to the barracks.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Sarah Thomassen, Sian Smith, Zena Pike, Jayne Donnelly, Caroline Hunter, Shabana Farooq, Sally Lynch and Josephine Crabb.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON THE 6TH DECEMBER 2017

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

PREVENT UPDATE

Harjit Hunjan, Community Partnerships Manager introduced the item. It was highlighted that David Scott, Head of Communities, Enforcement & Partnerships (RBWM) was the new Lead Officer for PREVENT. A number of meetings had been planned which included the PREVENT and Channel Panel.

ACTION- That David Scott attend a future One Borough Group meeting.

Inspector Louise Warbrick addressed the group and outlined that two pieces of work were being carried out at present which included monitoring and reporting community tensions. The first piece of work was from a recent statement from an organisations "Tell Mamas" that there had been some circulation nationally promoting 'Punish a Muslim Day'. Inspector Warbrick had been investigating any tensions within the Muslim Community and that hate crime/incidents should be raised along with any concerns. The second piece of work was being carried out with the Russian Community, to monitor any form of threats/incidents in relation to the recent tragic events in Salisbury. The Group were also made aware that there was a new Superintendent, Colin Hudson was in post.

ACTION- Inspector L Warbrick to invite Superintendent, Colin Hudson to the next One Borough Group.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPDATE AND SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS

Louise Freeth, Head of Revenues and Benefits (RBWM) gave a presentation on the Universal Credit Update and support for residents in the borough. Universal Credit had been live in the borough since 2015. There had been significant changes to be adopted in May, which included a roll out of universal credit to all working age customers. Universal Credit had replaced six local authority, DWP and HRMC benefits. The current system was in place as a live service for single individuals since 2015 and had served 380 customers, 100 of those had sought financial assistance with council tax. There were currently 23 restrictions in place for single people claiming assistance. The forum were reminded that from the 23rd May, universal credit would be available in Maidenhead and it would affect working age customers who would make a new claim or had a relevant change in circumstances. From July 2019- March 2022, there was a planned migration of remaining existing claimants and that the legislation surrounding this was yet to be confirmed.

The forum were informed of the differences between the universal credit live full service and that this would be available to all working age customers in relevant postcodes except those with more than two children, claiming one form of tax credit and wishing to claim another or living in specified accommodation (housing benefit claimants only). Customers had been encouraged to manage their online account and report any changes to circumstances via an internet enable device. It was noted that customers would no longer receive any paper notification letters in relation to universal credit. Members of the forum were informed of the process surrounding the universal credit full service and how claimants could apply for a new claim or maintain an existing claim through the online portal. Significant changes included the change of claim processing which would no longer be handled by job centres but by universal credit service centres. Claimants could now upload any relevant document onto their online journal through the online portal.

Customers who had already claimed a legacy benefit, for e.g. housing benefit would move to universal credit following a relevant change in circumstances. There were 382 customers currently in receipt of universal credit in RBWM who would need to transfer to the full service. Members were told that the transfer process would be managed by DWP and that this would start approximately three months after the full service had launched (currently under review). DWP customers would be advised of the process and when to complete their details, booked an appointment or verify their ID. Universal credit claims would be suspended or terminated if failure to transfer was successful. The roll out of universal credit had been delayed for the Maidenhead job centre from February 2018 to May 2018. As part of the roll out, direct payments to landlords had been introduced in December 2017, a new free universal centre helpline had been launched, from January 2018 there was a pause in new claims and increased advances up to 100% which were repayable over 12 months had been introduced. From February 2018, the 7 day waiting time for claimants had been abolished and from April 2018, additional two weeks support with housing benefits and universal credit could be awarded. The forum were told that temporary accommodation claims had been removed from universal credit and that those customers could claim housing benefit instead.

The Royal Borough would continue to provide, housing benefit for those of pensionable age, housing benefit for working age customers (in specified/temporary accommodation or with more than two children. Discretionary housing payments were noted as being £261,836 in 2017/18 and £234,892 in 2018/19. The Housing team would continue to provide local welfare provision and interest free loans for sourcing private accommodation. As part of the new services to be provided these included, Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) and assisted digital services for universal credit customers. PBS would help customers to adapt to a single household payment, the change to payment schedules (paid monthly) and whereby rent would now be directly paid to landlords. There were two elements to PBS which included money advice and alternative payment arrangements. This would help customers manage

their money monthly and pay bills on time whilst prioritising any rent due. The forum were informed that Universal Credit advance payments would provide emergency funds until the first universal credit payment could be made, additional financial support where there had been a change in circumstances, interim payments if the full credit award could not be paid for technical reasons and transfer assistance for legacy benefits. Budget advance would provide interest free advances for one off items, such as furniture, clothing or travel to work and this would be recovered over twelve months. The assisted digital service (ADS) was an initiative to support customers through the culture shift to individual responsibility and self-service.

The forum were informed that of the 382 universal credit customers that this figure was estimated to rise to 1500 and 225 of these customers would need PBS and 135 would need ADS. As part of the mapping existing assistance available for RBWM claimants, there would be seven IT help sessions across libraries, careers and job information would be available on Tuesdays, Universal job match assistance would be available in Maidenhead on Thursdays, CAB surgeries would be held in Windsor on Thursdays, Grow our own team would be available on Mondays and community learning and skills (CLASS) courses would be available in Maidenhead.

At the conclusion of the verbal presentation, members of the One Borough group discussed the following;

- Literacy issues or digital difficulties and ways in which this was being addressed.
- The reduction of services available to residents through the job centre.
- There would be an article in the RBWM resident newsletter to keep claimants or new claimants informed of the changes.
- That a national and partnership meeting would be held with the DWP and invites had been sent out to all relevant delegates.
- That Members could share their details for the purposes of sign posting and referrals.
- That on the 6th April 2018, there would be a meeting with DWP in the Town Hall, Maidenhead- Council Chamber to engage landlords with the change to direct payments.

ARMED FORCES COVENANT UPDATE

Harjit Hunjan, Community Partnerships Manager, highlighted that RBWM had been successfully nominated for a bronze employee recognition scheme and that this had demonstrated a clear commitment to be supportive of Armed Forces Service and Cadets. It also noted that RBWM had recently been nominated for the silver standard nomination (which would be assessed by the MOD Panel in April 2018) and that the Leader of the Council had committed to achieving the gold standard for RBWM. A key element of this had been the Reservists Policy which allowed employees to carry out their duties.

SIGNAL4CARERS AND HEALTHWATCH WAM UPDATE

Tamsin Phipps, Healthwatch WAM introduced the item and updated forum members on the recent activities carried out by Healthwatch WAM. The forum were given a brief overview of the Healthwatch service which had 142 organisations nationally and that Healthwatch WAM was an independent service running locally. There had been changes to the NHS and social services delivery and that these were to change dramatically in the future. The forum were informed that there had been collaborative working between the Frimley STP, WAM and the existing CCGs, however further feedback was needed to improve and enhance the services. Work had been carried out at Broadmoor hospital, within the Frimley STP and more primary care provision had been implemented. As part of the ongoing work, signage had been changed to help reflect the needs of patients and residents accessing Frimley hospital. As part of the ongoing ambition to improve services and experience, social media platforms were now monitored and great improvements had been made as a response to residents' concerns and issues raised on these platforms.

Sharon Bowden, Signal4Carers provided the forum with an update on the service. The forum were informed that Signal4Carers had taken over from Berkshire Carers in 2016. There had been 670 unpaid carers throughout the borough as part of their findings and extensive research across RBWM. There had been an upward trend in the uptake of carers who had signed up to the newsletters, information packs, better utilisation of useful contacts and higher referrals to signposted services. The forum were urged to ask any individuals that they were aware of, who they felt were unpaid carers to get in contact with Signal4Carers for advice and assistance. One Borough Group Members were also reminded of the bus that was in use to provide residents with information and would be parked up at various locations over the upcoming months.

CITIZENS ADVICE- WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD UPDATE

Chris O'Hare-CEO of Windsor and Maidenhead CAB updated the forum on the recent activities and work carried out by Windsor and Maidenhead CAB. The update included the following highlights:

- The forum were shown a short video on a case study of Alice (a client who had suffered with medical health issues and had fallen into a financial crisis).
- Details of how to access and make referrals to the service were outlined.
- The forum were told that RBWM had received a grant and this would be used to help alleviate some of the pressure that the oversubscribed service faced.
- A new telephone service which had pooled the local CAB services was in operation from 9-5pm, along with a dedicated email service and partner referral form.
- New outreach services had been launched to meet demand using recently received funding.
- The Windsor drop in service was no longer in effect.
- Appointments were now available after the initial assessment.
- CAB now worked with clients with a range of complex needs and also represented clients at tribunal. There was a current success rate of 75-80% of cases at tribunal.
- CAB also dealt with a range of client issues which included, housing related issues, such as retaliatory eviction, employment and financial issues.
- Income gained was £394,871 and debts that had been written off were approximately £260,000 and debts that had been resolved were £289,314.

Members of the forum were informed that the impact of advice and intervention had improved client wellbeing, reduced client interactions with RBWM as a local authority, reduction in falls, reduced hospital admissions and averted homelessness. There had also been associated costs of training for staff and expansion of the current service. The Bailiffs trust had been the biggest private funder of RBWM CAB and a vote of thanks was given to them. The CAB had to date helped with 400,000 housing related issues, 1,520,000 debt problems and 5.5million debit problems had been resolved.

COMMUNITY & MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Anthony Lewis, SWAMI informed members that SWAMI (Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead Initiative) would be holding a Community street showcase in Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead during July. SWAMI wanted to build upon the success of last year's Community Street Showcases and get an equivalent mix of local community groups involved publicising their activities once a year on the high streets of the three local towns. Members were reminded that more details could be found at www.swami.com

Jane Corry, Norden Farm informed the group that the Annual Norden Farm Family Arts festival would be taking place on the 30th March 2018 and that there would be 47 different workshops suitable for all ages, including circus skills, 3D printing and each workshop would cost £3 per person.

Tim Walker, Mens Matters update the group that there had been three weekly drop in sessions in Langley, Windsor and Maidenhead which had targeted social isolation and loneliness. A mindfulness workshop was to be held on the 22nd March 2018, which would be a two hour session which was to be held at Maidenhead Community Centre.

PC Boon, TVP made members aware of the launch of the Herbert Protocol, which aimed to help vulnerable dementia sufferers and their families, carers and residents. A new communications platform had launched where crime incidents could be reported online and would be in full effect by June 2018. The forum were also told that due to the Royal Wedding that any individuals attended the Royal wedding would have support mechanisms in place, such as the victim witness centre (to be held at Baptist Church, Windsor). Pre-paid parking and general would be affected throughout the Royal Wedding celebrations. Hostile vehicle mitigation measures had been implemented along with a crowd management plan which would be finalised over the upcoming weeks.

Svetlana Zaychenko, Open World updated Members with the success of the recent Russian Winter Festival which would be held annually. Planning was underway for the summer festival and the theme that had been selected was 'fairytale' for the upcoming festival.

ACTION- Svetlana to provide video for the next meeting of the Russian Winter Festival.

Lyn Mangisi, Radian Housing updated the forum that there had been a great turn out at the recent "swap shop" which had allowed vulnerable residents to pick up items with no costs. The event as very successful and there had been 400 items, and 195 had gone to the Thames Hospice with five Councillors in attendance.

Saghir Ahmed, Islamic Trust of Maidenhead, informed the forum that the annual "Visit my Mosque" day was held in both of the two mosques in Maidenhead. One Borough group Members were told that Prime Minister, RT hon Theresa May and all local councillors had attended. There had been a great turn out on the day and Members who attended also stated that it had been a great event.

Eileen Denny, WAM Get Involved, told the group that the RBWM volunteering sector awards would be held on the 26th September 2018 and that the WAM CVS Forum would take place on Wednesday 18th April 2018 at Maidenhead Synagogue. There was also a GDPR Readiness workshop being held, and the date was to be confirmed.

Jeffrey Pick asked that any interfaith groups contact him in relation to the Food Academy as they would like to have some diverse candidates take part in the initiative.

Samreen Aslam, NHS PC Team stated that Frimley STP had put in place a three day course for CEPN which had been successful with a good uptake.

The meeting, which began at 10.11 am, finished at 11.50 am

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....