

Andrew Taylor representative for Community Development Strategy Steering Group

There have been no further meetings.

John Rogers representative for Reading LINK

Reading LINK “Interested to Involved” Event

This successful event was held in July and attended by 33 local people who expressed their interest in becoming more involved with the Reading LINK. The event provided an opportunity for people to find out more about LINKs and the work being undertaken in Reading. Also an opportunity to feed into the four areas of involvement in the Reading LINK:

- Task & Finish Work Groups (Looking into issues raised by the community)
- Enter & View (A power of the LINK to enter & view certain care facilities)
- Patient Representatives for various committees
- Community Involvement (expanding the LINK into the community)

Following this event the LINK Board have agreed an action plan to take forward.

Reading LINK Community Engagement Survey

This survey was designed and carried out to give local people a stronger voice in determining how local health and social care services are delivered, and it has provided a valuable tool for exploring the issues that matter to people in Reading. The survey was completed by 221 people across Reading, many of who felt that their health and social care needs are being met, but the research suggests that Mental Health services, Access to NHS Dental Services and being seen on time for Hospital out patients and GP's are priority issues that cut across different communities and affect individuals of all ages. Many residents would also like to see improvements across social care provision but particularly in respect of helping carers access the services and financial assistance that they are entitled to. Therefore, improved access to information using a range of different media, specifically for social service provision, but also in healthcare services for some elderly, disabled, special needs and non-English speaking communities, is also identified as a priority for action.

The Reading LINK Board will now be considering how to take these priorities forward over the coming months.

Reading LINK Annual General Meeting

This will be held on Tuesday 2nd November 2010 5-7pm in the Kennet Room, Civic Centre Reading. Election of 4 new Board members will take place and nominees are invited. Closing date for nominations is 15th October. To indicate your attendance or for more information please email info@readinglink.org.uk or call the LINK office on 0118 958 4849

LINK Task & Finish Work continues on:

- Appointments at the Eye Clinic at the Royal Berkshire Hospital - This group are looking into issues raised by the Reading Association for the Blind, when accessing services within the out-patient clinic
- Access of MS Consultant at the Royal Berkshire Hospital - This group are looking into issues raised by members of the community about ease of access to the consultant for those diagnosed with MS.
- Quality aspects of domiciliary care contracts
- NHS Dental Access and treatment

Alan Magness representative for Reading Compact

The recent review of the Compact terms of reference has proposed a slimmed down structure of 12 members, drawn from:

- the VCF (5 places in total - one for each of the 4 major Forums, including the Faith Forum, plus RVA)
- the LSP family of Partnerships (4 places in total, filled by senior officers from major statutory services linked in to the LSP Board, Healthier Reading Partnership, Community Safety Partnership, Children's Trust)
- Reading Borough Council Members (3 Councillors)

The aim is to make the Compact a more strategic body and to embed it into the whole LSP structure. The role of the Compact is to be a critical friend to promote best practice in partnership working (i.e. how the VCF and statutory bodies can best work together). It will seek to do this by initiating reviews through each of the major LSP thematic partnerships. The Compact will develop a self-assessment questionnaire for these partnerships to enable reviews to be carried out in a structured way.

In the past the main focus of the Compact has been about funding relationships between the statutory sector (mainly Health and RBC) and the VCF sector. Clearly funding is always going to remain a key issue, particularly as the cuts in public expenditure begin to bite, but from the role set out above the Compact is about much broader issues than simply funding and will influence some of the debate about the shape of future service provision, Big Society etc as these issues become clearer in the coming months.

The LSP Board meeting on 14th September endorsed the new terms of reference for the Compact, and it is anticipated that formal sign-off by RBC will take place at the Council meeting on 19th October.

Funding issues will remain on the agenda of course. At the Compact meeting held on 2nd September proposals to move away from annual grants rounds to a broader and ongoing programme of commissioning as well as grants was flagged by RBC - current recipients of core funding grants will be receiving a letter shortly outlining the timetable for changes, and there will be 2 open meetings (12th and 14th October) to explain more about what is being planned and how it will affect individual organisations. Grants for 2010/11 are NOT affected - this is about planning for changes in 2011/12 onwards. Irene Cameron at Reading BC is the point of contact for this process if you have any concerns or issues to raise. Any group can attend the open sessions, not just those who currently receive core funding grants.

Clearly there are a lot of changes on the horizon, and there will be many challenges as well as opportunities for VCF groups to bid to be providers of services as the commissioning agenda rolls out over the next couple of years, so the new role and composition of the Compact is designed to ensure it can play an important part in improving partnership working through the changes that take place.

Tim Clewer representative for the Local Strategic Partnership

- Forum event & SCS
- Grant events

Forum Event & Sustainable Community Strategy

This year's Reading 2020 Forum event is planned for **Tuesday 16th November, 6:00pm to 8:30pm at the Town Hall**, and will continue the process we began at last year's event of developing a new Vision and Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Reading.

As key contributors to the process so far we would like to invite you to help shape the first draft of the SCS. You can view the current working document, which has been produced by a team of people drawn from a range of LSP partners, on this link:

<http://www.reading2020.org.uk/library/public/file71/>

It is very much a work in progress, and will be further developed as we go through the Autumn with input from yourselves and others.

So, the LSP Board would like your comments on this working document by Friday 22nd October so that they can then consider an updated version at their meeting on 3rd November. Following that meeting a broader consultation process is planned during November and December, which will include the LSP Forum event itself, to further refine the Strategy. Please send comments to this email address: Reading2020.Forum@reading.gov.uk

To reserve your place at the LSP Forum event please reply to this email with details of your name and any organisation that you are representing.

Meetings to discuss changes to the current grants system and future funding

Reading Borough Council will be hosting two meetings to discuss changes to the way voluntary sector organisations in Reading apply for grants. New measures are being introduced to provide greater flexibility to target priority areas and provide better value for money.

In the past voluntary sector organisations have applied for funding for the year ahead in a single annual grant round. The new proposal is to move to more flexible and frequent funding opportunities throughout the course of the year.

The plans would see priority-need areas funded through a mixture of competitive tendering and bidding opportunities ring-fenced to the voluntary and community sector.

If your organisation currently receives financial support from RBC or would be interested in exploring future funding opportunities, you are also welcome to attend a meeting being led by Council Leader Andrew Cumpsty and Cllr Mike Townend. Sessions will take place on:

Tuesday October 12 from 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, or
Thursday October 14 from 6.30pm in the Kennet Room, Civic Centre.

Both sessions are the same and groups can attend either session.

To book a place either:

Phone Suad El-Amin, Voluntary Sector Support Officer Tel 0118 937 2374, or

e-mail Irene Cameron, Funding Services Team Leader irene.cameron@reading.gov.uk

For more information, please visit

<http://www.rvadirectory.org.uk/news/20100920/changes-to-the-current-grants-system-and-future-fu>

RFF Development Worker Report on Building for Strength: July to September 2010

Update on projects mentioned at the last Open Forum:

- Reading Faith Forum partnered with a local Islamic charity to organise the *Reading Interfaith Football Tournament*. A total of 16 teams attended Reading University for a successful tournament. The majority of these were Muslim, but there were representative teams from the Sikh community and the Christian community, as well as non-faith groups who had heard about the tournament. In total, the tournament raised approximately £1000, which will be split equally between Reading Faith Forum, IMAAD and projects to support the flood-crisis in Pakistan. We are still trying to arrange an exhibition match between the best players of the tournament and a team from Reading FC's academy.
- The *Muslim Women's Group* is in its formational stage. One meeting has been held, where 9 women came to discuss their vision for Reading, and another is due to be held in a week's time. Following that, it will be a case of setting up the group on a more formal basis and implementing some of the projects emerging from the visioning sessions.
- The *musical confidence workshops* for small churches has been slow in coming together, partly because of need to await the green light for funding for it. However, four musicians from the major churches have expressed their support, and a presentation given to approximately 25 pastors has widened knowledge and support for the project. I have officially handed over the running of the project to the churches at this point, and will continue to facilitate it whilst no longer 'owning' it.

Snapshot of current group-focused work:

- Funding applications
- Helping a group determine the feasibility of a lunch club for the elderly
- CRB support
- Encouraging groups to engage in local democracy (Sustainable Community Strategy)

Funding applications provide a good case study for the work I have been doing with the groups. Three groups went through the process of applying for funding.

Initial support relates to project planning and identifying whether the suggestion is a viable project. A second stage is where trouble-shooting regarding the eligibility of the project occurs. Does the group have the correct policies in place? Does it keep accounts? Does it have too much money? In response to problems arising from these questions a consultation for a child protection policy was held and extensive support given in putting together annual accounts. A third consideration is identifying the most appropriate legal vehicle to deliver the project and meet the requirements of the funders. For one, this required drafting a new constitution to decide whether to set up an independent group.

Developments and Plans for the Future

A key barrier to fuller engagement by groups with wider society is the threat that this engagement poses to their identity through dilution. This appears to be a strong reason behind many of the groups who have not engaged with the project. It is pleasing, therefore, that this quarter has seen the development of links with religious umbrella bodies, which have the potential to translate the 'secular' concerns of the Building for Strength funders into religiously palatable concepts.

Amongst the Muslim community, a very fruitful interview on Ummah FM took place during Ramadan, and the development worker has managed to gain introductions to and develop some links with a number of groups addressing social, not solely religious, concerns.

Equally, amongst the Christian community, the issue of dilution has proved problematic and was the reason why one funding application was not taken forward. As mentioned, there is a degree of collaboration with some of the bigger churches in Reading on the music project. There has also been preliminary agreement to try to get Polish Catholics to support the generally Protestant or non-faith groups working on the streets to help with the specific problems of Polish people sleeping rough. However, it is hoped that this cross-working may be formalised a little further and early stage discussions about setting up a meeting between smaller churches and the

established churches are currently taking place.

A final project to mention for the next quarter is the annual meeting for Building for Strength. This will serve as an AGM, a networking event and an event to enable communication between third and statutory sectors regarding the barriers to engagement with one another. It is booked provisionally for Nov 18th in the Kennet Room in the Civic Centre and will likely last from 6:30 until 9:00. Confirmation of these details will be released in due course. All RFF members are invited to attend.

Tom Hudson

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Recycle bins

Reading Borough Council have sent this statement to the faith & voluntary sector.

We issue 240 litre recycling bins to charities and places of worship, if requested. They can also have green bins (for garden waste), if volunteers are doing the work.

All charities can have free concession vouchers to take all types of waste (except hazardous) to the Household Waste Recycling Centre, at Island Road. Any qualifying organisation wanting bins or vouchers in this way should contact us through our Call Centre

(0800 834035) or at streetcareAdmin@reading.gov.uk