

Introduction

1. These are the minutes of the round-table hearing for the WNF representations hearing, chaired by the Cabinet member for regeneration & corporate strategy held on Thursday, 12th August in Southwark Town Hall.

Background

2. The people at the meeting were:

Who	Representing
Cllr Fiona Colley (CFC)	Cabinet member for Regeneration & Corporate Strategy
Cllr Richard Livingstone (CRL)	Cabinet member for Finance & Resources
Emma Stewart (ES)	Women Like Us
Jackie Wray (JW)	Blackfriars Settlement
Jamal Ettetuani (JE)	Community Action Southwark
Ibukun Olashore (IO)	Organisation of Blind Africans & Caribbean's
Sandra Tomlinson (ST)	Elephant Jobs
Dr Isatu S Kamara (IK)	Elephant Jobs
Florence Essien (FE)	Elephant Jobs
Ahparo Rxxxdn (AR)	Elephant Jobs
Nathalie Reid (NR)	Prince's Trust
Nosa Neidion (NN)	Prince's Trust
Rosemary Watt- Wyness (RWW)	Prince's Trust
Gary Edwards	Black Business Initiative

Actions

3. The following actions were agreed at the meeting:

What?	Who?	When?
The status of the three contracts noted as being unsigned and therefore not concluded to be followed up through the appropriate council process.	LBS	
Organisations will be informed of the decision and provided with written feedback	KoK/CFC	Decision date 18 th .
CFC to review representations and take into consideration for decision to be reached.	CFC	

Minutes

4. The minutes are shown on the following pages and the numbering relates to number of the agenda item. These minutes also include the actions agreed.

Item		Action
1.	<p>Meeting objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To serve as opportunity for groups affected by the cuts to the Working Neighbourhoods Fund to make deputations against the savings proposals. 	
2.	<p>Overview of WNF report (rationale and methodology)</p> <p>CFC introduces the meeting, noting the savings required as a result of need to achieve £732k in-year cut to the 2010/11 WNF element of the authorities Area Based Grant by the government. Aside from the savings options already identified from other departments and uncommitted funds, savings of £324K remain to be found. CFC notes that a decision will not be reached today, rather further to the hearing, a decision will be made next week. Organisations will be informed of the decision and provided with written feedback.</p> <p>KoK introduces report and notes that CFC will be making a decision with regards to the noted savings to be made next week; this will take into consideration the issues raised at the representations hearing today, whilst also acknowledging the shortfall in funding that is yet to be found.</p> <p>The delivery plan for 2010/11 was awarded in March and includes 35 contracts for delivery by 27 organisations. In June 2010, the council was in contract with all but two of the organisations. Officers have recommended that as the contracts for these two organisations were not executed, negotiations should cease and contracts should not be completed. Nonetheless, a greater amount of money was still to be found as part of the savings. Officers have reviewed the information and scoring at the tender stage and have recommended that the savings be achieved through early termination of contracts where organisations scored less well. The six lowest scoring organisations</p>	

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	<p>and two organisations with three unsigned contracts were thus identified.</p> <p>KoK notes that an equalities impact assessment was carried out to demonstrate what this decision would mean, particularly as the funding itself applied to disadvantaged groups, so by the very nature of the savings to be found, there would be some negative effect on the organisations affected and the communities they serve. As a result of this assessment the recommendation was modified to propose that further negotiations should proceed with 2 of the unsigned contracts to provide services at a reduced level, 50% of that originally intended.</p>	
3.	<p>Deputations hearing</p> <p>Each organisation in attendance was given opportunity to present their organisations response to the savings proposals. CFC and CRL would then ask questions of the organisations as a means of this supporting the representations made.</p>	
4.	<p>Blackfriars Settlement – Jackie Wray</p> <p>JW notes that she was representing Blackfriars Settlement, in attendance on behalf of Julie Corbett-Bird, Director at the Settlement.</p> <p>JW notes the four principle reasons the Settlement oppose the savings proposals and the methodology used by the council which she believes failed to take into account:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The funding supports excluded groups and in particular excluded groups that the Settlement have been working with whom the project has a high success rate. The Settlement is concerned that the most excluded will suffer as part of this 	

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	<p>and other savings proposals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="379 353 1230 584">2. The specific offering from the Settlement; four years experience in and their fine tuning of holistic training and courses for service users. Their other services offer support for their clients providing benefit beyond the employment and training offer. <li data-bbox="379 640 1230 763">3. The fact that supported service users already struggle to get into employment, ceasing the funding will make this more difficult <li data-bbox="379 819 1230 999">4. Concerns with the gap between the contractual notice serving (one month) and three month notice required for staff employed by the Settlement. Noted a requirement for £2,098 to meet the needs of the redundancy process. <p>To date the programmes run by the Settlement have been working well; meeting the needs of hard to reach communities and groups. It would be the Settlements preference for the proposals to take account of the needs of the specific needs of the communities that are supported by the funding. Specific concern relates to the target groups who will be dropped of the radar as a result of the cuts. With regards the one month notice served, this will mean that aside from other funding streams that are also seeing cuts, the project and staffing impact will be high.</p> <p>CRL asks whether the work of the Settlement and the specific client group supported is the best avenue of support available and whether there may be other projects that provide similar support. In responding, JW notes that there are varying opportunities available, however in the early stages of the project, clients were being referred to the Settlement from other organisations.</p> <p>The project has seen particular successes in a small group of adults with learning difficulties who have all gone on to new programmes or employment; thus improving their opportunities to progress. People</p>	

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	<p>who previously thought that they were unable to become employed, are now engaged and seeking employment.</p> <p>CRL asks whether it is usual for employers in this form of project to provide three month notice periods for staff. JW responding notes that the Settlement takes pride in being a good employer, and as the savings proposals effectively amount to redundancies they would like this to be considered with regards an appropriate timescale to serve notice with possibly contributions being sought from other unaffected projects to meet the savings requirements.</p>	
5.	<p>Women Like Us – Emma Stewart</p> <p>ES provides brief background on the organisation, working in a borough that has 61% of young people living in low income households, noting that they serve women in the borough whose care responsibilities act as a barrier to them being in employment. The organisation has reached 8000 mothers in the last term through school book bag communications and takes on a client base of approx 40 mothers each month. The key to the work of WLU is that organisation works closely with JobCentre Plus for referrals, supporting mothers to get back into work..</p> <p>The organisation appreciates the difficult economic climate we find ourselves in. ES notes that Women Like Us would welcome aligning their contractual outputs to the LDA Employability Programme funding that would mitigate the impact of efficiency proposals to be made by the council and are seeking for that recommendation to be endorsed.</p> <p>ES notes reasons why the WLU organisation provides added value including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social Enterprise 2. Reach and support women who are otherwise off the radar 	

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	<p>and not picked up by Job Centre Plus.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Supporting economically inactive women 4. Specialise in helping mothers find part time work 5. Have a proven track record; the Adult Advancement Careers Service project have supported 76 clients into work and worked with 400 parents. ES notes that though not all the organisations outputs have been met last year but a target based on the time it takes the organisation to support women back into work is not easily measurable. <p>CFC asks how the council can support Women Like Us in securing the LDA funding streams. ES notes that effectively the organisation requires the payment upon outputs which does cause an issue sustaining project running costs.</p> <p>CRL asks about how the employment outputs add value to the women supported. ES responds that the organisation recognises the need for support to mothers with young children as well as the fact that some of the clients will also be low skilled and have limited time to seek employment. The organisation focuses on childcare and in-work benefits which act as a gateway to them reaching the community and sourcing part-time jobs whilst also lifting families out of poverty. ES noted the changes in conditionality for lone parents which will require lone-parents with younger children to actively seek work from October 2010. This will increase the number of clients who will need support from their project.</p>	
6.	<p>Elephant Jobs, Isata Kamara</p> <p>IK notes that she is in attendance in support of Elephant Jobs, the Aylesbury Access Centre and Aylesbury Learning Centre. IK notes that the Learning Centre is not a project, but rather a hub with 10 groups operating on a permanent basis out of the centre. IK notes</p>	

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	<p>that the savings proposals do not cause the concern; rather it is the short timeframe that has been set aside for the proposals to come into effect. The savings proposals will have a negative effect on the projects and people supported, as well as projects operating out of the centre having to seek alternative premises.</p> <p>The impact of the savings proposals is already being felt, with some projects opting to not continue providing the courses that had been running. This is because they do not want to commit to printing and advertising costs for future courses whilst the future of the centre is uncertain.</p> <p>The service users are also from deprived communities with no alternative places to go. IK also notes that as not all the outputs of the projects are being measured, i.e. Latin American Festival, there is issue with the means by which the assessment results are collated.</p> <p>There will be impacts on match funding streams from ESF, LDA and DWP. Closure would impact on the current Big Lottery bid which if successful could cover rent and overheads in the future.</p> <p>Sandra Tomlinson attended as a worker from the Learning Centre and noted that though the cuts do not affect her personally as an employee, the impact on the people that use the Centre is more of a concern as higher charges will need to be levied to organisations using the Centre which they are unable to afford as they have already applied for their own funding.</p> <p>They feel that there is an ongoing issue with the level of rent charged by the Council.</p>	
7.	<p>OBAC – Ibukun Olashore</p> <p>IO notes that OBAC has a proven track record of delivering training services for the last 12 years. They actually only receive a small</p>	

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	<p>grant from the council, with other funding streams having been sourced from but not limited to the LDA and the Learning & Skills Council. In the last two years, OBAC has offered dedicated support for the blind or visually impaired but have widened the remit of their services to people with other disabilities. As well as supporting clients with helping employers understand the ongoing needs of blind/disabled employees and providing in work support to their clients. OBAC are also a FND sub-contractor of Action 4 Employment. As well as ensuring a complete one stop shop approach is provided for their clients, covering support and advice on other barriers, ie housing, isolation, as well as access to DWP funds to cover technology for people with visual impairment.</p> <p>9 people were supported into work last quarter and 50% of OBAC staff have disabilities, this is an advantage when supporting others with disabilities. This is not the only cut, A4E (FND provider) have also informed them that the contract will end. If there is alternative funding available through the LDA then they would like to access that.</p> <p>OBAC receives referrals from JCP, this is because of their specialist expertise that JCP cannot offer directly. Referrals have greatly increased over the last two quarters. OBAC is able to provide specialist equipment; there is no other provider who can do this.</p> <p>CRL asks if there was scope for any of the other contracts to be varied upwards to cover some of the savings made through WNF. IO pointed out that they hope to be successful in aligning outputs to the LDA funding, however other potential resources are also under pressure and the SfA funding will be reviewed in September and ends in December.</p>	

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8.	<p data-bbox="328 349 906 383">Black Business Initiative – Gary Edwards</p> <p data-bbox="328 434 1198 568">GE notes that Sunny Lambe is on leave, and he is attending and representing on his behalf. He notes the key factors to be raised in responding to the savings proposals;</p> <ol data-bbox="376 618 1222 999" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="376 618 1171 703">1. The project delivery contracts for delivery of the SEF and SYEP projects <li data-bbox="376 752 1171 837">2. Outstanding payments for invoices for quarter 1 for these projects <li data-bbox="376 887 1222 920">3. Outstanding payment for quarter 2 invoices for staff payment <li data-bbox="376 969 1090 1003">4. For negotiations to commence for contract delivery <p data-bbox="328 1048 1209 1283">CFC acknowledges that the contract issue is being considered by the council and will be handled separately. CFC asked if there was anything further to add about the actual projects being delivered by BBI. GE advised main worry surrounded 50% cuts makes no attempt to enable delivery of further two quarters.</p>	
9.	<p data-bbox="328 1469 738 1503">Princes Trust – Nathalie Reid</p> <p data-bbox="328 1554 1233 1890">NR tables presentation the strong results of the Trust; 16 businesses set up, led by residents in Southwark. A further 12 young people have joined the Get Into Cooking Scheme with 5 now being in full time employment, one is an apprentice and three are in training. A further 12 young people have been trained on the Enterprise side, with 2 businesses starting and 10 new Southwark residents expected to start this month.</p> <p data-bbox="328 1939 1230 2024">NR notes that the concerns of the Trust specifically relate to the decision being based on process and concerns over the status of the</p>	

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	<p>contract. It is the Trusts view that its programmes offer excellent value for money, whilst also bringing significant funding streams into the borough and reducing young people's reliance on the benefit system. Princes Trust assert that they checked with their contract manager in April and were advised to proceed with delivery, despite contract being unsigned.</p> <p>CFC notes the dispute about the contract and that this issue that will be considered and followed up outside of this representation hearing.</p>	