

# Grants Committee

## Priority 3: Tackling poverty through employment - partner perspective

Item: 5

**Report by:** Ross Diamond      **Job title:** Chief Executive Redbridge CVS  
**Date:** 21 November 2018  
**Contact Officer:** Yolande Burgess  
**Telephone:** 020 7934 9739    **Email:** [yolande.burgess@londoncouncils.gov.uk](mailto:yolande.burgess@londoncouncils.gov.uk)

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### Summary

At the Grants Committee AGM in July 2018, Committee members requested that a provider delivering the Priority 3 programme attend the next meeting to reflect on the partner perspective, given the significant challenges and under-performance of the priority.

Redbridge CVS delivers two commissions for Priority 3; this represents slightly more than a third of activity across the priority.

Ross Diamond, the Chief Executive of Redbridge CVS, has kindly agreed to join Grants Committee on 21 November to take questions and discuss the programme. Mr Diamond has provided a short paper for members, to introduce his organisation and note some of the challenges with delivering the programme.

### Recommendations

The Grants Committee is asked to:

- **Note** the paper from the Chief Executive of Redbridge CVS



## RedbridgeCVS Employment and Skills Team: Outreach East and Aim Higher

103 Cranbrook Road  
Ilford IG1 4PU

Telephone: 020 8553 1004

Email: [info@redbridgecvs.net](mailto:info@redbridgecvs.net)

Web: [www.redbridgecvs.net](http://www.redbridgecvs.net)

### 1. Our Priority 3 Projects

RedbridgeCVS is currently delivering two London Councils Projects, Outreach East and Aim Higher. These are Priority 3 funded schemes which provide support to long term unemployed and economically inactive residents aged 19+ with a focus on people with long term work limiting health conditions, mental health needs and ethnic groups with low labour market participation rates, women facing barriers to employment, homeless and people recovering from drug and/or alcohol addiction or misuse. Aim Higher is delivered in Camden, City of London, Enfield, Hackney, Islington and Tower Hamlets. Outreach East is delivered in Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest.

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Both projects aim to improve the confidence, skills, employability, health, social and financial inclusion of participants through the offer of:

- Personalised 1-1 information, advice and guidance from an experienced adviser
- Initial assessment and action plan
- Access to work experience and job vacancies
- Access to accredited training i.e. functional skills, digital skills
- Employability training
- CV building
- Interview skills
- Application support
- Social activities and events
- Money management advice
- Assertiveness and confidence building
- Mindfulness
- Job brokerage including work trials and guaranteed interview schemes
- Pre-employment training leading to jobs
- Self-employment and enterprise
- In work support



For more detail about RedbridgeCVS and our Employment and Skills work, please see Appendix 1.



### 2. Delivery

Delivering employment services is very rewarding but these contracts have been particularly challenging including because of the requirements for clients' eligibility, service outputs and results need to be evidenced. Time spent on administration/management has significantly increased and requires double the resource, which impacts delivery. (See section 3, Challenges, below for details.)



The opportunity these contracts give to allow us to work in partnership with voluntary sector organisations, including some which are quite small, doing innovative and intensive work with vulnerable groups is very positive.

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Establishing strong referral partnerships, e.g., joint outreach and cross referral with Thames Reach, adds great value to the project

Participants have achieved some very positive outcomes. Examples include:

- A 60+ male completed our 5 week OPEN (Older People into Employment Now) course, undertook 1-1 bespoke Excel training and progressed into an apprenticeship with the local authority. He has now been in work for over 6 months and was recently promoted.
- A BME female with a disability received 1-1 information, advice and guidance, travel training and support, then accessed a supported work trial with an employer who employed them after 3 weeks.

We have found that some boroughs are more difficult to work in than others where the local authority has their own employment provision targeting people of the same eligibility, and it can be hard to engage people onto the projects. However, our partners work closely with local authority employment & skills provision to minimise duplication of services, aid cross referral and provide funded services where their participants might be expected to pay for them through council adult colleges e.g. some ESOL provision. We believe that there should continue to be a mixture of borough based and pan London commissioning. The Priority 3 funds are targeting multiple groups and it makes sense for large partnerships working across multiple boroughs to deliver these. However, borough based projects that seek to meet specific needs of individual boroughs are sometimes best place to meet these needs when they enable voluntary sector organisations with local knowledge, specialist expertise and existing relationships with the target group to lead and deliver. Some of the smaller organisations have been closing as most of the contracts are so large and they are not always resourced to complete the application process (EOIs, PQQS and ITTs) to become a delivery partner on them, so cannot access funding to sustain their service. Enabling groups like RedbridgeCVS to lead partnership bids is a very positive way to support such local activity.

During the life of the project there has been an increase in participants presenting with multiple and complex needs such as long term health conditions, disabilities, mental ill health, homelessness and other housing issues. These participants need a great deal of support but often this additional input is not recorded (or reported), as this is not a paid output. This means that this additional work is hard to resource.

### **3. Challenges**

As has been acknowledged by London Councils there have been particular challenges with these Priority 3 contracts, due in part to the way they were commissioned. Lead partners, including RedbridgeCVS, have worked constructively with Yolande and her team to address some of these issues and we will be able to deliver some excellent outcomes for individuals as a result. Key challenges faced have included confusion about the eligibility criteria for participants, and the evidence requirements. Some of these concerns have been addressed whilst others remain a challenge. We have still not been provided with a functioning Reporting Database that would allow us to instantly generate reports to monitor project starts by borough, age, employment status and/or

ethnicity etc. The current web based form and database are still problematic and time-consuming. The turnaround time for claims is greatly improved since the start of the contracts, and we are now able to make monthly claims, which has particularly helped the smaller providers who might otherwise have faced serious cash-flow issues. The deployment of London Councils QA administrators have been incredibly helpful, particularly when accompanying our Partnerships & Development Manager to monitoring meetings to check partner paperwork and provide instant feedback, as well as when attending our office to check paperwork before the claim is submitted. There have, however, been occasions when their advice has been incorrect. Ensuring that all advice is written and circulated would help to ensure consistency. Our staff and partners also continue to report that the approach to evidencing outcomes can sometimes be heavy handed and not allow for common sense. We do appreciate the time and energy that LC staff have put in to help resolve the earlier concerns that led to a number of partners withdrawing and we are optimistic that we can end these projects with ourselves and our partners knowing that we have delivered much needed support to some of London's most vulnerable people who are being helped to ensure that they can contribute to the economy and lead more fulfilled lives.

Universal Credit has meant there is even more of a focus from DWP to ensure people are in full time work, which means people on benefits and working part-time are being strongly advised to increase their hours of work. Those working part time are often in 'zero hours contracts' and experience in-work poverty. It would be very helpful if future projects allowed us to support people on zero hours contracts and/or experiencing in-work poverty.

Universal Credit is also making it more challenging for partners to provide evidence the employment status of participants: Work Coaches at various Jobcentres have advised that they have as many as 7 different categories into they may place a claimant, depending on their circumstances.

Further joined up work and communication between LC and DWP to enable simpler referrals, sign-off for referrals and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> party verification from Jobcentres would really benefit this and future projects.

Ross Diamond  
CEO RedbridgeCVS  
8/11/18

## **Appendix 1: Background information for LC Grants Committee 2018**

**RedbridgeCVS** (Redbridge Council for Voluntary Service) is a member of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) and the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and is committed to promoting and developing local voluntary and community action.

### **Our Mission**

“To promote, support and develop a strong, effective and independent voluntary and community sector in Redbridge.”

### **Our Aims**

We plan to succeed in RedbridgeCVS's mission by working to achieve the following aims:

1. Redbridge voluntary and community sector to be strong and strategic partners when working with local statutory bodies and promoting a positive vision of Redbridge.
2. Redbridge voluntary and community sector to maintain its independence and flexibility.
3. RedbridgeCVS to be a credible and authoritative representative of the voluntary and community sector.
4. RedbridgeCVS to be able to respond to Redbridge voluntary and community sector support and development needs; enabling Redbridge's voluntary and community sector to grow to meet local needs.
5. RedbridgeCVS to encourage, support and facilitate the development of sustainable communities.
6. RedbridgeCVS to provide sound planning for sustainability in order to continue the furtherance of our work supporting the voluntary and community sector in Redbridge.

It should be noted that these aims are interrelated and in no particular order.

RedbridgeCVS hosts Volunteer Centre Redbridge and delivers a range of capacity building support to Redbridge's voluntary and community sector, including a comprehensive training programme (in partnership with Redbridge Institute for Adult Education, which recently received an “outstanding” rating from Ofsted), a Community Fundraiser (who has helped raise over £300,000 in the past 12 months), a range of public health funded community outreach programmes (relating to stigmatised health conditions such as TB and HIV) and an innovative Social Prescribing scheme which has recently been awarded multi-year funding from the Department of Health and Social Care (with match funding from Redbridge Council and BHR CCGs).

### **Employment and Skills**

RedbridgeCVS has delivered employment and skills support (including contract management) since 2010. We originally established this work on behalf of the East London CVS Network (which no longer exists) and branded as “East

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Tenders". We now deliver this as RedbridgeCVS Employment and Skills Team (Redbridge EaST).

RedbridgeCVS has over 8 years' experience of successfully leading and managing multi borough ESF funded projects across south east London. Along with the ESF/London Councils projects working across 7 boroughs, RedbridgeCVS have also managed DWP projects, and delivered as a subcontractor on SFA funded provision; for LB Redbridge and LB Barking & Dagenham, making a total project partnership management track record of £5m over 10 years.

Past ESF projects are Jobshop Community Outreach (JSCO), Get Working (GW) Women Works (WW) and Get Redbridge Working (GRW)

JSCO was a £2.2 million project delivered by a partnership of 7 organisations. It supported Barking & Dagenham residents into work, training or jobsearch through the provision of IAG, accredited ESOL, IT, functional skills, pre-employment training, soft skills training; jobsearch support, job brokerage and in work support. The project engaged 2671, 2249 accessed IAG, 264 completed ESOL qualifications, 306 progressed into further learning, 974 into work and 542 sustained work for 26 weeks.

GW was a project delivered in partnership with 3 organisations that supported Waltham Forest residents into work, training or jobsearch through the provision of pre-employment training, IAG, soft skills training and work experience. The project engaged 445, 360 accessed IAG, 70 completed work experience, 60 progressed into further jobsearch or training, 191 into work and 119 sustained work for 26 weeks. The project exceeded job targets.

WW supported women to move closer to the labour market through 1-1 support to build confidence, personalised IAG, work placements/volunteering, employability and soft skills training. The project engaged 439 women across 7 boroughs, 350 of which accessed 1-1 IAG and 99 work experience. 88 progressed into further jobsearch or training, 165 into work and 82 remained in work for 26 weeks. The project exceeded job and sustained job targets.

GRW, delivered in partnership with 2 organisations, supported Redbridge residents to move closer to the labour market through 1-1 IAG support, work experience, job brokerage, employability training and soft skills development. The project engaged 204 people, 142 accessed IAG, 41 completed work placements, 71 progressed into work; 43 remained in work for 26 weeks and 20 progressed into jobsearch or training. The project exceeded sustained job targets job targets.

### **Current London Councils Projects: Outreach East and Aim Higher**

These projects are funded by the European Social Fund and London Councils Grants Committee (under their Priority 3) and provide support to long term unemployed and economically inactive residents aged 19+ with a focus on people with long term work limiting health conditions, mental health needs and ethnic groups with low labour market participation rates, women facing barriers to employment, homeless and people recovering from drug and/or alcohol addiction or misuse. Aim Higher is delivered in Camden, City of London, Enfield, Hackney, Islington and Tower Hamlets. Outreach East is delivered in Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest. These projects

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aim to improve the confidence, skills, employability, health, social and financial inclusion of participants. These projects offer:

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Our current delivery partners are:

Partner name	Project	Target groups
<b>RedbridgeCVS</b>	Outreach East and Aim Higher	Working with long term unemployed and economically inactive pre-dominantly BME women, parents, with a health condition and/or mental ill health and homeless. A small number with learning disabilities
<b>DABD</b>	Outreach East	Working with long term unemployed and economically inactive but pre-dominantly people with health conditions
<b>Harmony House</b>	Outreach East	Working with long term unemployed and economically inactive but pre-dominantly BME and parents
<b>Ellingham</b>	Outreach East	Working with people with learning disabilities and health conditions
<b>L&amp;Q (formerly East Thames)</b>	Outreach East	Working with long term unemployed and economically inactive
<b>HCT Group</b>	Aim Higher and Outreach East	Working with long term unemployed and economically inactive
<b>Faith Regen Foundation</b>	Aim Higher and Outreach East	Working with long term unemployed and economically inactive but pre-dominantly BME , parents and homeless



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<b>Work Works Training Solutions</b>	Aim Higher	Working with long term unemployed and economically inactive
<b>St Giles Trust</b>	Aim Higher	Working with homeless, ex-offenders, in recovery from drug or alcohol addiction and mental ill health.
<b>LTEN</b>	Aim Higher	Working with long term unemployed and economically inactive
<b>Volunteer Centre Hackney</b>	Aim Higher	Working with long term unemployed and economically inactive including those with mental health needs
<b>Bromley by Bow Centre</b>	Aim Higher	Working with long term unemployed and economically inactive but pre-dominantly women, parents and BME
<b>Osmani Trust</b>	Aim Higher	Working with long term unemployed and economically inactive including BME women, parents and people aged 19 – 24.