

BRADFORD DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

ANNUAL REPORT AND CONFERENCE REPORT 2014/15



BRADFORD DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

ANNUAL REPORT AND CONFERENCE REPORT 2014/15

CONTENTS

PAGE NO.	
3	INTRODUCTION
3	HOW THE ASSEMBLY WORKS
4-10	ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2013/14
4-5	<i>Assembly Steering Group</i>
5-6	<i>Health & Wellbeing forum</i>
6-7	<i>Equalities Forum</i>
7-8	<i>Regeneration & Prosperity</i>
8-9	<i>Environment Forum</i>
9	<i>Cultural Forum</i>
10	<i>Young Lives Bradford</i>
11-14	BRADFORD DISTRICT ASSEMBLY ANNUAL CONFERENCE MARCH 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Bradford District Assembly (BDA) was established in 2009 and has successfully developed its objective to become an effective and influential voice for voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations in Bradford district within the local authority and other public sector bodies. CNet is commissioned by the council to co-ordinate and facilitate the Assembly, and to support its members and representatives.

The Assembly is firmly embedded in local structures and partnerships and is recognised as an important means of communication and engagement with the sector. It is open to any not-for-profit VCS organisation in the district via membership of forums, attending events and exchanging information.

This structure enables organisations to work together to shape local policy and services, and increases mutual understanding between the VCS and statutory partners. Representatives are elected or selected to participate in partnership meetings, task groups, and consultations to present a voluntary sector perspective.

The Assembly website contains information about how the organisation works, who is involved, reports from meetings and representatives, updates on important policy developments or consultations, and the latest decisions that affect our district's communities. Visit www.cnet.org.uk/bradford-district-assembly/

HOW THE ASSEMBLY WORKS

The Assembly comprises eight **thematic forums** all of which have open membership for people involved in voluntary/community groups and organisations. Collectively there are over a thousand members participating in the Assembly. The forums meet regularly and are independent but work under the Assembly umbrella. They provide a vital means of accountability for the Assembly and enable more co-ordinated responses to situations and consultations. Forums work with public sector colleagues to represent the needs of communities and the VCS, tackle inequalities and find solutions to the growing challenges for service provision.

- Health & Wellbeing Forum
- Regeneration & Prosperity Forum
- Young Lives Bradford
- Bradford Environment Forum
- Equalities Forum
- Safer Communities Forum
- Cultural Forum
- Religion and Belief Forum

The Assembly Steering Group (ASG) has representatives from each of the forums plus other VCS partners. Its role is to filter views, issues and information from the forums through to decision making negotiations.

ASG members meet representatives from the council on a regular basis, at meetings called the **Relationship Management Group (RMG)** which is chaired by the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio holder for Safer and Stronger Communities. This provides an opportunity for honest and open debate and problem

solving, using information from the forums and elsewhere. The RMG has been meeting since January 2011 and has played a key role in influencing and informing strategic decisions.

For further information and details of how to get involved, contact the Assembly coordinator, Janet Ford janet@cnet.org.uk 01274 305045 or visit the website www.cnet.org.uk/bradford-district-assembly/

Also on the Assembly website:

- A directory of assembly representatives and officers
- Minutes of meetings
- Dates of meetings and events
- Reports from representatives
- Links to other websites and information such as Council papers and reports

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2014-15

BRADFORD DISTRICT ASSEMBLY STEERING GROUP

Caroline Schwaller retired from her role as CEO, Keighley and Ilkley Voluntary & Community Association in July 2014, and therefore stepped down as the elected Chair of the Bradford & District Assembly. The Assembly Steering Group, together with CNet staff and board members are extremely thankful to Caroline for her energy, ideas, leadership and commitment to the role over the last 5 years.

Matt Band was elected as the new chair in August, having been Vice Chair for a number of months. Matt arranged an away day to review current work streams and develop task groups to lead on each agreed priority. Matt left Bradford's One in a Million in December to take on a new role in London, and was therefore unable to continue supporting the Assembly, we thank him for his drive and innovation.

Helen Speight, BDA Vice Chair and also Co-Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Forum took on the role of interim Chair, and effectively led us into the current situation with a new Chair, Paul Stephens. Helen and Paul intend to work together to cover the various aspects of the role, with Helen thankfully continuing her role as Vice Chair despite increased pressure from her day job.

Paul brings a wealth of experience to the role and is committed to ensuring that the sector has a strong and effective voice in local decision making. For the past four years he has been Chief Executive Officer of Shipley and Bingley Voluntary Services (SBVS). He is an active member of the Bradford District Assembly, regularly attending the Health and Wellbeing Forum and until recently actively involved in the Regeneration and Prosperity Forum.

Over the past few years Paul has had the opportunity to work at a strategic level within Bradford and district. He led on the Targeted Support Fund Commissioning Improvement Programme. Bradford was one of eleven commissioning improvement areas and in March 2011 the results of the research were presented at a National Conference in Sheffield. He also sits on the DIVA Bradford Partnership, the Bfunded Partnership and the Active Giving Group.

"I look forward to serving the sector through the role of Chair of the Assembly. At a time of great upheaval and increasing challenge, there has never been a more important time for the voice of the sector to be heard."

Members of the ASG commit time to this work alongside their jobs and voluntary work. They have a common determination to create and sustain a strong and open relationship with local government and the NHS - for communities and the VCS.

Here are some examples of work areas covered by the ASG over the past year:

- Council's review of commissioning and procurement arrangements
- Structural changes in the council and NHS
- Review of infrastructure support services for the VCS
- The Compact (written agreement between the council and the VCS)
- New Deal – support to the councils consultation process, feeding the VCS perspective through the Assembly Forums
- Support in dealing with the issues around Welfare Reform, and the Poverty Inquiry undertaken by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Janet Ford
BDA Co-ordinator

ASSEMBLY FORUMS

i. HEALTH & WELLBEING FORUM

Co-chairs: Natasha Thomas and Helen Speight

This year has again brought challenges to local organisations. The Co-Chairs and the myriad of reps have worked diligently to keep the sector up to date and to continue to advocate and promote the role of the VCS in improving the health of Bradford's communities.

The forum has over 140 members all of whom receive the information gathered and presented at the Forum, and meeting often have 25 attendees.

The Co-Chairs have also sought speakers to ensure that forum members are kept up to date with the ongoing changes within the health and social care environment. This year speakers have included:

- Marcus Beacham who updated the Forum on the New Care Act
- Kerr Kennedy – explaining how Young Lives Bradford Consortia had been formed
- Sasha Bhatt – Self Care and Engagement a CCG Perspective
- Liz Burdett – CCG Funding Review
- Kathryn Jones – New Deal Conversation

The review of the CCG funding in 2013-14 was related to the work of the Forum and particularly of Natasah Thomas the Forum's Co-Chair whose presentation last year at the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee ensured that the difficulties could not be ignored. The outcomes in the review, will hopefully inform practice in commissioning going forward.

This year saw the re-commissioning of many Public Health contracts. The Co-Chairs met throughout the year with Liz Barry Head of Commissioning, to try and avert the difficulties that had occurred with the CCG funding that had led to the CCG Review.

The Forum also investigated the possibility of forming a consortium. Meetings with Young Lives Bradford and presentations have provided additional information to the sector. There are now possibilities of one larger consortium for the VCS something that will be explored in the coming year.

The year also brought significant challenges to how the forum has operated and its ability to really influence the health agenda in Bradford. Initial changes have been made reshaping the meeting to have a reps meeting at the beginning to begin to focus on a coherent shared message to our statutory sector partners.

The pressure on the sector to provide representation on numerous boards and at numerous meetings continue, below is a list of some of the boards that our reps attend and ensure the sector's voice is represented:

- Bradford Integrated Care Group
- Transformative Integrated Care Board
- Self-Care Steering Group
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy Group
- JSNA: all chapters
- Area Health Hubs
- Bradford and Airedale NHS Equality Group
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Health Improvement Partnership
- Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee
- Commissioning Strategic group
- Assembly Steering Group

As Co-Chairs we want to thank all the reps who give their time willingly to attend meetings and take the messages of the important role of the VCS in addressing health inequalities and improving health outcomes. These reps not only ensure that the VCS and its service users are not forgotten but also ensure that the VCS is kept informed of new developments and openings for co-design and co-production of better services for our communities. As funding reduces organisations have limited capacity to volunteer this time so our thanks again to them.

Our thanks as always go to Janet and Polly at CNet who continue to support the forum and ensure that it runs smoothly.

ii. EQUALITIES FORUM

Chair: Liz Firth; Vice Chair: Neal Heard

The forum has built a membership of 65 representatives from a diverse range of groups and organisations district wide. Members agreed the following priorities for this year:

- Highlight the disproportionate impact of service cuts on certain communities
- Ensure effective representation of under-represented groups at meetings, consultations and events

- Work with partners in health to identify and tackle health inequalities
- Work with council partners to influence and inform the community of interest plans

Forum members worked with partners from the CCG's to deliver an event which brought equality groups together to discuss issues relating to diabetes. Participants developed ideas about how to raise awareness of the disease which is often preventable by incorporating lifestyle changes.

Forum representatives attend a range of meetings including the Equalities Delivery Group, the Stronger Communities Partnership Board, and the Bradford and Airedale NHS Equalities Group. Work is currently ongoing to review representation across key decision making boards and working groups. The forum also intends to widen the membership and include groups currently not involved.

The forum was involved with the Council's equality objective action plan and has had an opportunity to influence the process for future equality impact assessments (EIA's). Members also participated in a council budget consultation to look at specific areas which impacted on equality groups.

iii. **REGENERATION AND PROSPERITY (RAP) FORUM**

Co-chairs: David Wilford and Tony Dylak

This has been a busy year with inevitable cuts to member organisations. Uncertainty of budgets is causing organisations to re-think how they deliver services, and what they can continue to offer in the current climate.

Consideration of collaborating and partnership working is high on the agenda in order for organisations to sustain services.

Highlights of the year are as follows:

We restructured the way we plan meetings and invited guest speakers on relevant topics. We included where possible people from the council and representative bodies. Speakers have included:

- Martin Green, Senior Project Officer (Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership) regarding links with the Local Enterprise Partnership
- Wendy Hall (Strategic Support Officer, CBMDC) regarding joint commissioning and budgets
- Ian Day (Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods) regarding plans as a new AD
- Sue Caselton (Strategic Programmes Officer, CBMDC) regarding European funding
- Hugh Rolo (Locality) regarding social finance and the new funders language
- Mark Clayton (Strategy Officer, CBMDC) regarding Producer City and changes in enterprise approach
- Mike Cowlam (Assistant Director of Regeneration, CBMDC) regarding joint commission and new delivery ideas
- Richard Norton (Supporting Links to Commissioning Manager, Voluntary Action Leeds) regarding VCS engagement in ESIF European funding

New members have joined the forum, and meetings have been well attended. The members have made offers to help co-design new services in light of the cuts with the local Authority but progress in this area has been particularly slow not through the forums enthusiasm, more a hesitant LA partner.

The Producer City board has been created by disbanding the Regeneration and Prosperity Partnership Board. We have a position on one of the three boards - PLACE. The new boards are more proactive and business focussed to get the City moving forward. Two other boards - KNOWLEDGE which notionally we have a position on and which used to be our Employment Skills Board place. The third is Regeneration but we have no representation yet on this.

We have been active in promoting the new European structural funds ESIF with the VCS representative on the Local Enterprise Board and we have an informal endorsement for employment and business support from the council via Mike Cowlam. RAP is exploring consortium approaches to European funding.

iv. SAFER COMMUNITIES FORUM

Chair: Peter Bloom

Vice Chair: Yasmin Khan

The forum has continued to focus on the agreed priority work areas which are:

- Develop the prevention and intervention agenda and the VCS role within it
- Increase VCS representation and engagement at strategic level.
- Engage grassroots groups and communities
- Building the resilience of VCS organisations to be equal and active partners

The Community Safety Partnership undertook a review this year. The key change is that the three delivery sub-groups (Neighbourhood and Reassurance, Drugs and Alcohol; Reducing Crime and Reoffending) were merged into one, which sits under the CSP strategy group. We continue to have VCS representation across the new structure.

The Forum were involved in the allocation of this year's Community Safety Fund for 2015/16. Applications from VCS organisations demonstrating their capacity to contribute to prevention and building resilience were endorsed by the forum prior to submission to Community Safety Partnership Board. We also led a VCS consultation on the Domestic and Sexual Violence Health Strategy for Bradford and District.

This year we have worked with a range of partners including David Smith (Third Sector Adviser to the West Yorks OPCC) and Rebecca Trueman (Safer Communities Partnership). During 2015-16, we aim to work more closely with public sector partners in the field of Community Safety and a priority will be to ensure VCS involvement, building on previous work to promote the sector as an equal partner in terms of service design and delivery.

v. BRADFORD ENVIRONMENT FORUM (BEF)

Chair: Carlton Smith

The developing urgency of climate change, combine with the distraction of austerity measures and diminishing resources to enact climate mitigation measures are of great concern to the Forum. The effects of extreme weather events are shown to disproportionately impact upon the health and economic resilience of the most deprived communities.

Strategically, CycleBradford have made a significant contribution through the year to the impending cycle superhighway from East Leeds to Bradford City. Similarly Forest of Bradford and BEES have continued their substantive contribution to the management of the districts woodlands and wild spaces. Food Network members continue to deliver elements of the wide ranging Food Strategy. The Allotment Action Group have seen their lobbying beginning to see action relating to the Allotments Strategy. Forum members continue to engage in strategy development and scrutiny, with provision of local knowledge and detailed technical input.

36 BEF members cover a wide spectrum of environmental issues and activities, including food, renewal energy, energy conservation, green space improvements, environmental education, environmental awareness, environmental play, recycling, sustainable transport, sustainable woodland management, forest schools, wetlands, parks, bugs and bats. The year has seen specialist networks maturing and enlarging within the forum members supporting training, sharing best practice, coordination and support. Members combine to engaging hundreds of volunteers and benefit tens of thousands of Bradford residents in environmentally and socially beneficial activities.

Carlton Smith, Chair

vi CULTURAL FORUM

Co-Chairs: Suzy Russell and Irfan Ajeeb

Vice Chair: Javaad Alipoor

The Cultural Forum now has 129 members from a broad range of backgrounds including VCS, social enterprise and freelance artists covering the hugely broad range of cultural activity in the district. We meet every six weeks and encourage members to suggest meeting topics. We have recently had some very successful themed meetings including one on theatre and performance art. We have worked hard this year to ensure cuts to the arts are made in the least damaging way possible and have successfully influenced the way in which money is distributed around the district. We are planning an event on 11th June to showcase the arts "Great Art Changed my life".

This year's key achievements include:

- Influencing the way in which BMDC arts and cultural finance is distributed around the district
- Sharing a huge amount of information and providing a platform for different organisations and artists to work together
- Building the profile of culture across the district
- Beginning to work to build the profile of the arts in non-arts sectors
- Contributing to key local documents

These achievements fit well with our priorities which are:

- Influencing policy
- Raising the profile of the forum and of culture throughout the district
- Bringing people together
- Work to improve marketing of cultural activity across the district
- Influence Strategic decision making
- Ensure commissioning processes are fair and equitable for the sector
- Promote equalities and embed the equality agenda

- Jointly Create Festivals
- Increase work and volunteering opportunities within culture

vii YOUNG LIVES BRADFORD
Chair: Kerr Kennedy

Young Lives Bradford continues to provide the Children & Young People’s VCS with a wide range of infrastructure support. Based at Bradford CVS, our team in 2014/15 comprised Kerr Kennedy and Dionne Norman. In February 2015 Kerr Kennedy stepped down and is succeeded by Peter Horner. Our current network totals over 360 groups and organisations.

In 2014 our Core Strategic Group met bi-monthly and engaged with Bradford Children’s Trust Board and partners, Bradford Safeguarding Children Board, the Bradford CCGs, the Bradford VCS Assembly, Young Lives Yorkshire & Humber network and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services. We also hosted three Quarterly Forums: in April, September, 2014 and January 2015. We manage more than 20 VCS representatives to a wide range of strategic partnerships and through them, the VCS contributed to local strategies such as Child Poverty, Special Educational Needs, Participation and Early Help. Young Lives Bradford also co-ordinated voluntary sector contributions to the recent independent Youth Offer Review, commissioned by Bradford Council in Autumn 2014. We facilitate a recognised VCS sub-group of the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board that contributes to its work and aims.

We continue to provide up to date communications – weekly e-bulletins, quarterly newsletter, and regular social media – to the network. Additionally, liaise with the Play Forum network. We facilitate a recognized VCS sub-group of the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board that contributes to its work and aims.

We have been heavily involved in facilitating VCS involvement in Bradford’s successful application to the Big Lottery’s ‘Better Start’ programme which has secured £50million over ten years to improve the well-being of children 0-3 in three disadvantaged wards of the District. Young Lives has a place on the Better Start Partnership Board and will continue to support the programme. Currently we are advising them on commissioning practices.

We work in partnership with Bradford Council on a range of issues: including the management and administration of the Young Futures Grant fund under the Government’s Youth Contract programme for 16-18 NEET young people (not in employment, education or training).

We are pleased to report the ongoing development of the Young Lives Bradford Consortium – a separate initiative – which now has 48 members and is actively pursuing service delivery contracts.

As a network we continue to play a vital part in contributing to both strategy and delivery of services. Our current biggest challenge is trying to ensure that the VCS is recognised as such by the local authority and for them to accept our desire to be further involved in the co-design and co-production of services going forward.

BRADFORD DISTRICT ASSEMBLY ANNUAL CONFERENCE THURSDAY 19TH MARCH 2015 AT CARLISLE BUSINESS CENTRE

89 people attended the fifth BDA Annual Conference

Paul Stephens - BDA Chair opened the conference and welcomed everyone attending. Paul gave a short presentation about Bradford's current landscape in relation to funding cuts and the Council's New Deal INITIATIVE. He encouraged the sector to be fully involved in developing solutions to reductions in funding and to work together with partners to change how services are delivered. He thanked the Assembly Steering Group and forum members for their continued commitment and support to Bradford's voluntary and community sector.

In summary:

The Assembly and sector as a whole need to focus on the present and on opportunities in face of funding cuts. We should also look to the future and how we can work in collaboration with CBMDC and other strategic partners regarding co-design

Presentations

- i. **Judy Robinson – CEO, Involve Yorkshire and Humber**
- ii. **Nick Hodgkinson - Project Coordinator, Community Advice Network**
- iii. **Michaela Howell – Service Development Manager, Bradford Trident**
- iv. **Neal Heard – Equality Together**

The presentations from the event can be downloaded via the Assembly website: www.cnet.org.uk/bradford-district-assembly/Assembly-Conference/AssemblyConference2015

Workshops

Workshop themes: Health and Wellbeing, Culture, Economy, Safer Communities, Equalities, Children and Young People, Environment

Aim of the workshops:

To identify potential forum priorities for the forthcoming year. The proposals will be discussed at the next meeting of each forum, when members will agree them.

Workshop Outcomes / Feedback

Identify key priorities for consideration by each forum (see below).

Forum priorities identified

Young Lives Bradford

- 1. Commissioning and co-design** (including Youth Offer review, Early Help)
- 2. Narrowing the gap** (Identification and supporting areas most in need)
- 3. Communication, conduit and representation** (in particular making representation more effective and becoming an active partner in decision making and not just a voice.)

RAP Forum

1. Employment and skills – look at ESIF

- Connect with Leeds providers
- Mental health and disability strands
- SFA Match
- Creative partnerships
- Chamber of commerce
- Transport – including access to transport / affordability
- Employment for young people

2. Business support and high growth businesses– ESIF is large companies

- Business growth hubs – from 1 April
- Need to lobby / encourage support for small business (SFA match?)
- Private match
- Need to improve communication between funders (DWP / CCGs) – lead on partnership
- Young people – have to work for benefit
- Need to find creative partnerships to deliver services (example for disabled)
- Transportation

3. Welfare / Benefits Advice – CAN

- Should also nurture new (smaller) partners
- Work up proposition for public bodies to eliminate waste
- Better coverage
- Collaborations
- Transport for employment needs / disabilities

Safer Communities Forum (All to be revisited and specific action plans developed)

1. Develop prevention and intervention agenda and VCS role within it.
2. Engage grassroot groups and communities.
3. Building resilience of VCS organisations to be equal partners.

Cultural Forum (all with a view to potential changes in three years' time)

1. Strengthening the forum.
2. Clarifying the role of the forum and relationship with other entities / organisations.
3. Impact of arts / culture on health and wellbeing.

Equalities Forum

1. Inequality around IT

- Access to information
- Skills

- Resources
- Welfare Reform – claiming benefits online

2. Communication

- Equalities issues in all Assembly Forums
- Responding to issues
- Access to services
- Training around equalities issues

3. Health Inequalities

- Develop and build on relationship with health
- Social prescribing – develop relationship between VCS and health

Health and Wellbeing Forum

1. Voice and influence

- Messages: Equality / inequality
- Take the solutions – 10 year plan for change
- Knowing what we offer
- ASG needs to take the joint message from all
- Crisis / narrative, tested solutions, surprising friends

2. Focus on prevention / early intervention – building case for this

- Forming an evidence base
- Trust us
- Collaboration of organisations

3. Streamlining engagement / better engagement strategy

- Break it down, bring specialisms together
- Know who / where to contact for best influence with our limited resource
- How do you get collective voice and what do you do with it?

4. Health inequalities

- How do we engage with the priorities?

5. Co-design

- Cuts across all policy/ strategy/services
- Links to engagement

6. Better informed – sector to lead and better informed communities

- Educate ourselves
- NHS 5 year plan
- The Care Act
- Devolved NHS
- Working together – what do we mean by co-production
- Why we are important to you – this evidence says
- Gaps in access to services

Follow up Actions

- The Assembly Steering Group will feed back to the Relationship Management Group, lead council officers, commissioners and partners as appropriate
- Workshop discussions and outcomes will be included in the Assembly Conference Report.
- Agreed priorities will form part of the forum's work plans for the forthcoming year.

Feedback sheets

23 received. Some key points included:

- *Let's not get hung up on gender / race; focus on producing results to benefit wider community*
- *Very good conference and information*
- *Helped to better understand the issues faced by the VCS and wider sector*
- *Good opportunity for networking*
- *Perfect name and location / good length and interesting agenda*
- *Organisers fail to acknowledge BME speakers / participants. Nearly half of participants are BME but no BME speakers or any BME issues*
- *Good overall – but need to follow things through*
- *First conference – reception staff friendly and helpful*
- *Very interesting speakers and topics – relevant*
- *Friendly and helpful delegates – lots of ideas*
- *Very good facilities at the venue: staff very helpful throughout the day.*
- *Need to ensure women / race coming into leadership roles*
- *How do we ensure an effective VCS which makes a difference?*

Report written and compiled by Janet Ford, Bradford District Assembly Co-ordinator with contributions from the Bradford District Assembly Chair and Forum Chairs

This report is available to download at www.cnet.org.uk/bradford-district-assembly/

Alternative formats available on request

