

Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Review Panel 2 (Active Citizenship)

Date: Thursday, 13 February 2020

Time: 19:00

Venue: Committee Room 3, Town Hall, New Broadway, W5 2BY

Attendees:

Councillor Praveen Anand, Councillor Sitarah Anjum, Councillor Jaskiran Chohan, Councillor Karanvir Dhadwal, Councillor Mrs Seema Kumar, Councillor Tariq Mahmood, Councillor Gary Malcolm, Councillor Swaran Padda, Councillor Chris Summers

1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Urgent Matters

There were none.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were none

4 Matters to be Considered in Private

There were none.

5 Minutes of the previous meeting - 14 November 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 14th November 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

6 Active Youth Citizenship in Ealing

Steve Curtis; YES Project Participation Worker, Integrated Youth Service gave a presentation to the Panel on the Northflix Cinema Club. Four members of Northflix Cinema Club – Sumaya Abdullahi, Teni Adejumo, Daisey Delaney and Chloe Olayiwola – assisted with the presentation. The Panel noted that the club had been set up and funded by the Safeguarding Partnership Board which was set up to promote such projects. Northflix Film Club was based in Northolt and run by a group of students who attended local schools. The club was run as a free service for the community. Screenings took place at 4:30pm on a Wednesday evening. The club was publicised in a variety of ways including word of mouth, posters in schools and youth clubs, and peer mentoring. Social media was also used to generate interest, mainly via Instagram.

The aims of the Film Club were to provide a safe space for younger people in the community to relax and watch a film in a safe space for free. In doing so the Northflix representatives believed that the project helped to reduce the risk of young people becoming involved in unsafe activities such as drugs and alcohol. The club contributed to giving young people a more positive image, whilst promoting the wider use of the library beyond books. The group felt the Club enhanced the library by promoting its use as a central part of the community.

The Northflix team explained how they felt the Film Club could be developed suggesting that attendance needed to increase by improving promotion and the room in which the films are shown. In order for such improvements to be made financial support needed to be provided for more comfortable seating, for instance.

The Panel heard that the Northflix team felt it was important for the club to be led by young people, as it provided familiarity for the young people attending the screenings. It also meant that those leading the club were able to develop leadership and organisational skills, as well as being a rewarding way to generate positive change within the local community. Participation in this club gave young people leadership opportunities that would otherwise not exist. This was helpful for young people who were looking to enhance their CVs, as well as building other soft skills such as public speaking and wider communication and interpersonal skills.

Steve Curtis confirmed that the Club were exploring sponsorship opportunities with external organisations in order to fund refreshments for those attending the club.

The Panel asked the following questions:

- What was needed in the way of support for the club?
- Why was the leadership of the club all girls?
- Was the venue large enough?
- If the club was charged for using the facilities, would this be an issue?
- How far were audiences coming from to watch the films?
- Was showing the films just after school finish time restricting the size of the audience?
- Were parents engaged in the film club?
- Were there any statistics on the types of audiences for Northflix?
- Were there any initiatives for wider engagement to assist with the running of the club?
- Were attendees of the club encouraged to make their own short films?

In response to the questions asked by the Panel, Steve Curtis and the representatives from Northflix Film Club confirmed that:

- They wanted suggestions and assistance in promotion of Northflix Film Club; more comfortable seating; improved curtains/blinds/shutters for windows to darken the room where the films are shown.

- They felt the leadership was entirely made up of girls because boys had other interests, primarily football and some had concerns regarding personal safety.
- The venue was large enough for the time being and normally held between 30 and 40 seats but had a maximum capacity of 60 people.
- No charge was made as it may discourage the young audiences being targeted, the collection of money would need to be administered and there may be licencing issues.
- Audiences were generally local coming from Medlar Farm Estate and local schools but had also come from the Racecourse Estate further away from the Library in Northolt.
- Showing films just after school leaving time was felt to be the best time to get the most audience during the week so that they arrived straight from school and did not go home before the film club and so this was not felt to limit the audience. However, Northflix was looking into the possibility of showing films on a Saturday thereby expanding interest in club and therefore the audience for it.
- Sometimes parents attend the screenings with their children particularly with younger ones. All the Northflix leadership team live locally so it was not an issue for parents for the team to go to the library from a safety point of view as they all lived close to it.
- No statistics were currently being gathered regarding the audience though it was felt that about 60% of the audience were girls and 40% boys.
- Regarding wider engagement, Membership was being considered and Nick Mayers (Library Supervisor - Ealing) mentioned that Film Club roles were also being considered to provide those involved in running the club with a development path. To the last point, both membership and roles within the club, if implemented, would provide statistics in the future. Some wider engagement had already taken place in the form of a short film made with a 4th Year film student from West London called 'Screenings with Meanings' with discussion afterwards There was felt to be a whole plethora of ideas to build a regular membership.
- Plans for encouraging those involved in the Club to create their own films were being considered for the future.

The Panel considered the evidence given and concluded that the seating needed improving to make it more suitable for use for screening film. Consideration also needed to be given to those with disabilities, as the current room set up meant that those in wheelchairs could not be accommodated. Another important improvement that had been identified was shutters to darken the room in order to enhance the cinema atmosphere.

The Panel thanked the Northflix Film Club support team their efforts and the free support. Nick Mayers was trying to obtain softer chairs and was looking into provision of a laptop to stream movies. Moreover, Northflix and Library Services were trying to create a partnership Tesco, Sainsbury's or LIDL for support with refreshments.

The Chair and Vice Chair awarded certificates of merit to the representatives of Northflix Cinema Club and highly commended their work in the local community.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Note: Councillor Mahmood left the meeting during consideration of this item.

7 Resident involvement in the Ealing Library Service

The Panel received presentations from the residents involved in the Ealing Library Service from:

Councillor Jasbir Anand (Portfolio Holder for Business and Community Services)

Manny Manoharan, Ealing Library Services

Paul Miller, Ealing Commercial & Procurement Partner

Representatives of Community Managed Libraries:

- Alison Stewart (Northfields Community Library)
- Graham Kelly, Chair, Board of Trustees Ealing CVS (West Ealing Community Library)
- Barbara Tilley, Ealing CVS (West Ealing Community Library)

Following Cabinet's decision in July 2019 on the strategic direction for the Ealing Library Service 2019-2023, the service report provided an update on the outcome of the invitation to residents and the communities to run five of the libraries (Perivale, Pitshanger, West Ealing, Hanwell and Northfields) and the Home Library Service.

Several representatives of the Community Managed Libraries (CMLs) addressed the Panel regarding their work.

The Panel was asked to:

- consider and comment on the information provided; and
- make suggestions for further development accordingly

The Panel was reminded by Councillor Dhadwal that it was not there to scrutinise the strategic decision to invite residents and communities to run the libraries.

The Libraries had been closed on 21st December 2019 subject to small capital projects for buildings to bring them up to the latest compliance levels. The aim was to hand over to CML partner organisation no later than March/April 2020 unless major issues were found.

Library Services were working with the CMLs to mobilise at the earliest opportunity. If issues were encountered, this timeline could be extended to May/June 2020. There was a possibility of dual occupancy during transition whilst CMLs were being trained up. Library Services wanted activities, such as the example just heard (Northflix), to use the CMLs.

Ealing CVS were represented at the meeting to discuss their involvement helping to set up a CML at West Ealing and Northfields CML were represented. Northfields Library was adjacent to the Log Cabin Children's Centre and Councillor Paul Driscoll (not present at this Panel) was one of its trustees.

The Panel asked the following questions and further comment on:

- Benefits of the CML Approach
- Encouragement of the use of Libraries
- The transition to CMLs and the associated timetable
- The volunteer-base including level of interest, support, feedback, recruitment and expected level of commitment
- CML Funding
- Governance of CMLs and recognition of Trustees
- CML training and support
- Contingency plans
- Information sharing between CMLs
- Support for CMLs and the role of link workers

The response to the Panel's questions and requests for further comments

Benefits of the CML approach

- The Panel was directed to the letter from Jenny Oldroyd, Chair of Trustees, Northfields Community Library on the positive effect on mental health and active citizenship.
- Ealing CVS commented that local interest was high.

Encouragement of the use of Libraries

- Manny Manoharan had been looking to film clubs to be part of the additional activities to encourage the use of libraries. Ealing CVS explained that use of the libraries as community hubs helped deal with issues of social isolation. The hub was also to be used for Public Health events such as McMillan, etc. West Ealing CVS wanted to provide a warm welcoming atmosphere. Ealing CVS commented further that West Ealing Library had become a proper community hub which was key to its success. At Northfields CML, the hope was to make it a community lending library but with extended activities such as Maths clubs and crafting clubs as well as other children's activities, printed newspapers for older people and youth-led activities for young people. Northfields CML was also working with South Ealing Primary care trust on themed library sessions and was developing a fundraising scheme. To help this activity they were building a PR and marketing team.
- At Northfields CML, one of the initiatives was for volunteers to visit local schools to obtain book lists from the schools. Support was also sought from local businesses; there was a very active force of volunteers in the local area.

The transition to CMLs and the associated timetable

- Paul Miller commented that they wanted the timetables to be adhered to. Ealing CVS had been running the library in West Ealing for some time and that over time, each library would have its own CML

partnership like the West Ealing one. The plan was for the Northfields Community Library to open in April 2020 run by groups of volunteers.

The volunteer-base

- Councillor Jasbir Anand commented that the volunteer base was high, and feedback had been very positive.
- Ealing CVS illustrated this by commenting that at one large engagement 200 people filled out the feedback forms. In Northfields, 100 people had signed up as volunteers.
- The main issues of concern to volunteer feedback contributors raised opening times, seating and toilets, together with providing lots of ideas.
- When considering recruiting volunteers, different role descriptions were used to find out what volunteers might want to do. At West Ealing recruitment days were held on a Saturday. Volunteers were first asked where they lived to determine which CML was appropriate for them to work in. The message for residents was that we were all in it together in other words, volunteers would work locally but work together.
- Northfields Community Library was asking their volunteers for 3 hours a month minimum, that they were working out a rota and that one person was managing the rota system and not all the volunteers would work in a library.

CML Funding

- Paul Miller stated that funding was different for each of the CMLs and that start-up funding was in place for two libraries and dates had been scheduled for partner organisations. These were good partnerships that were committed to this being a success
- Ealing CVS would help any volunteer group to get CML funding.
- Two grant applications were being finalised for Northfields CML and there were also donation schemes for individuals and other support.

Governance of CMLs and recognition of Trustees

- Ealing CVS, which had been in existence since the 1970s, was moving to West Ealing Library from the Lido where it had been since about 2000.
- A Community steering group had been set up and because the West Ealing Library was next to both Sainsbury's and the Local Police Station, both had signed up to be on the Steering Group.
- Ealing CVS commented that a partner day had been proposed, where all CMLs would open to engage with other CMLs and the community as there were obviously common issues being faced by all the CMLs.
- Northfields Community Library commented that Trustees were under a lot of pressure and were working closely with Ealing Library Services to link with events to build relationships.
- Northfields Community Library was planning to measure volunteer benefits using standard methods such as LEO and NESS.

- Manny Manoharan stated that the contributions made by every trustee at meetings with Officers was recognised as were the challenges facing them.

CML training and support

- The Panel asked about the support for CMLs and Councillor Jasbir Anand responded by stating that it had become clear during the CML Application process some CMLs had strong skills and some were in need of more training. The Panel needed to know what training was required and in particular what would make the biggest difference, also if there was to be a big change such as handing over responsibility to voluntary groups there was a need to measure success as others wanted to see whether or not the change was working
- Training of Volunteers could include for instance Safeguarding and Data Security and Privacy. At Northfields CML, the idea was to train key staff so that they could train others.
- Councillor Jasbir Anand stated that training was important particularly in areas such as GDPR, some volunteers had worked in libraries previously so were familiar with processes and procedures. All training was important, but the Panel was not sure about the need for Key Performance Indicators. The Council would be supportive of every CML through the transition process and beyond that.
- Manny Manoharan agreed that the right training was important, but pointed out that Stock movements would be monitored (by Library Services) to assess the number of people engaged which activities for each CML.
- Ealing CVS staff would be trained and then they would train the volunteers themselves.
- Ealing CVS would then train the volunteers and the Volunteer Centre would be based in West Ealing Library.
- Northfields CML was to be trained in stock management policy, GDPR and safeguarding, etc. but the training dates in March were still to be finalised.
- Paul Miller said that the Library Service would be as flexible as possible with training and that it was not the case that once trained the CMLs would be left on their own.

Contingency plans

- Northfields Library planned to always have 3 volunteers in the library. Access to a Trustee is always available to contact. There was also a rota if someone did not turn up. If staffing reduced to only two people, then the plan is to close the library until enough people turned up. Alison Stewart anticipated this may only happen in cases of sickness.

Information sharing between CMLs

- The Panel asked if there were any plans for an idea sharing forum for CMLs. Barbara Tilley responded by saying there were plans for this

but it was not happening presently during the busy initial CML set-up period.

- Regarding information sharing, Councillor Jasbir Anand informed the Panel that information sharing would take place on the partner event day. The Panel asked about the frequency of information sharing meetings. The CML representatives responded by saying that information sharing was ongoing, and that West Ealing Library worked closely with Ealing Law Centre and the Northfields Library and there was an online support group. Alison Stewart added that Northfields Library was also sharing policy information with the Perivale and Pitshanger Libraries. The Panel suggested that perhaps there could be an annual summit.

Support for CMLs and the role of link workers

- The support provided depended on what CMLs felt they needed; some of it was provided by the Library Service officers and some was signposted.
- Jenny Oldroyd, Chair of Trustees, Northfields Community Library, had asked in a letter to the Panel whether there would be any helpline-support or any wellbeing offer to make sure that their work was recognised. Paul Miller stated that a Helpline had not been considered but would be looked into. Manny Manoharan stated that the contributions made by every trustee at meetings with Officers were recognised as were the challenges facing them.
- Manny Manoharan confirmed that the Link Officer duties would be focused on initial training and followed by ongoing training, as well as stock management for which Ealing Library Services maintained responsibility.
- Regarding borrowing and returning books, to a different CML, Manny Manoharan stated that this would still be part of the stock management and therefore the responsibility of Ealing Library Service. Furthermore, if a book were borrowed from a library in any one of 17 participating London boroughs the book would still be returned to the originating library.

Councillor Jasbir Anand said that these were exciting times and she was confident that partners would be able to engage with the community and that Ealing was there to support their activities.

Councillor Dhadwal thanked the presenters for their valuable work in the local community in running the libraries.

Resolved: That the presentations and reports be noted

8 Panel Operations

Harjeet Bains, Scrutiny Review Officer presented the Panel Operations report which included Member feedback from recent site visits in **Appendix 1** and an updated work programmes in **Appendix 2**.

Cllr Dhadwal proposed that any suggestions or recommendations coming out of the Panel's discussions should be sent to the Scrutiny Review Officer to include in the Panel's Draft Final Report which would be considered at the next meeting which was the last meeting of the Panel.

RESOLVED: That the Panel's Work Programme (Appendix 2) be approved.

9 Date of Next Meeting

The Panel noted that the next meeting of the Panel was due to take place on 8 April 2020 at 7pm.