

**1. The Cooperative Council Citizens Commission  
Room 125, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton**

**10.00am – 12.30pm**

**6 September 2010**

**Minutes**

**PRESENT**

**Commissioners:** Cllr Steve Reed  
Cllr Jackie Meldrum  
Lord Victor Adebawale  
Richard Bridge  
Martin Green  
Srabani Sen  
Matthew Taylor

**Delegates:** Josh Ryan-Collins, Researcher, New Economic Foundation  
Helen Santer, Director of Operations, Waterloo Quarter BIDS  
Malcolm Brabon, Partnership Manager, Business Link in London  
Richard Chambers, Principle and Chief Executive, Lambeth College  
Ted Inman, Chief Executive, South Bank Employers Group  
Andrew MacDonald, Director of Partnership and Market Intelligence, Business Link  
Phil Ruston, Development Director, Serco Local Government  
Derrick Anderson, Chief Executive, London Borough of Lambeth

**Officers supporting**

**Commission:** Thomas Man, Senior Policy Officer, Lambeth  
Julie Stoltman, Senior Policy Officer, Lambeth  
Ofordi Nabokei, Policy Officer, Lambeth  
Sophia Looney, Director of Policy, Equalities and Performance, Lambeth  
Anne Nunn, Democratic Services, Lambeth

## **APOLOGIES**

### **1. Welcome and introductions**

The Chair of the Commission, Councillor Steve Reed, welcomed everyone and highlighted the aims and objectives of the meeting.

### **2. Delegate initial statements**

#### **Phil Ruston, Serco**

The following key aims and objectives were highlighted:

- To engage, learn and inform from service users
- To build access to and provide responsible services
- To build capacity and capability

The following key challenges were highlighted:

- Performance management was disparate across service providers
- Key skills and capabilities would need to be identified
- Service improvements would need to be developed in line with principle 7
- There was a range of services to invest, maintain or divest
- Capability and capacity

Previous experience in working with local government had demonstrated that joined-up services could result in improved services and increased take up of services. Extensive engagement with citizens was essential for capturing existing knowledge and a customer centre could be seen as a vital link between citizen and government.

#### **Helen Santer, Waterloo Quarter BIDS**

Helen Santer clarified that BIDS was an urban management organisation, representing around 320 organisations. BIDS offered a number of both general and specific opportunities, including:

- Flexibility – BIDS was currently branching into areas previously not associated with BIDS, for example corporate volunteering.
- Local focus of the BIDS.
- BIDS was a valuable resource to accessing businesses across the borough.
- BIDS engaged with businesses which were part of the local community.
- Cross-borough working opportunity.
- Cost savings – commissioning were seen to enable cheaper service provision.
- Local employment and volunteering opportunities.

- Increased access to funding streams, including funding from the European Social Fund and London Development Agency.
- Considerable partnership working.

In response to questions from Commission members, Helen Santer also clarified:

- BIDS currently had an annual turnover of around £500k, of which 14% was spent on overheads.
- BIDS was managed by a combination of administrative support and local government support, with specific officer time being allocated.
- BIDS maintained a focus on outcomes around investment and disinvestment and linked performance to results and outcomes.
- BIDS operated a strict performance management system which was outcome focussed. If underperforming, services would be transferred to others who could deliver the desired outcomes.
- Knowledge sharing and back office support was being provided to enhance capacity building.
- Extensive citizens engagement often resulted in increased innovation.

### **Ted Inman, South Bank Employers Group**

The following comments were provided on the principles within the strategy for the Cooperative Council:

- Lambeth was seen as a strong community leader, whilst the role of the Council as an enabler was seen as weak and would need to be strengthened to enable a successful Cooperative Council.
- It was necessary to move away from the 'one size fits all' approach.
- There was a need for a stronger focus on engagement with local businesses.
- To enable economic development and growth and address worklessness, more focus on partnerships with private businesses, central government departments and other organisations was essential.

### **Josh Ryan-Collins, New Economic Foundation**

The New Economic Foundation was a think tank focussing on various issues, including sustainability, wellbeing and justice, and the organisation was committed to the Cooperative Council model.

The following comments were provided on the principles of the Cooperative Council:

- The model was seen as an opportunity to radically transform Council business, moving beyond a passive service model with little scope for input by residents. It was essential that residents were seen as assets, enabling improved public services.
- It was necessary to assess existing capacity and utilizing that.

- Building reciprocity – there were several ways of rewarding people for their time and services, including developing a public loyalty scheme for example. The cooperative model was also seen as a way of tackling inequality.

### **Richard Chambers, Lambeth College**

Richard Chambers provided an overview of Lambeth College and the need for a review of the future of the College following the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010. Future joined-up work with other colleges, perhaps cross-borough, could potentially result in the loss of local focus.

The following comments were provided on the Cooperative Council model:

- There was a tension on how funding was provided.
- In terms of personalisation, it was vital to note that outcomes were currently measured on qualifications rather than on value or personal growth.
- There was a need to rationalise agendas and issues in moving forward.

In response to questions from Commission members, it was also clarified:

- A dialogue around procurement issues and practices was needed if the Cooperative model was to be successful.
- The Council would need to start to see residents as a resource rather than an inconvenience. It was important to build on existing communities and relationships.
- Further consideration needed to be given to the ways in which Council officers and staff within other public sector organisations were managed, particularly whether innovation was actively encouraged and whether people were being rewarded for innovative ideas.
- A culture change within the Council was necessary, resulting in the Council becoming an enabler and with increased focus on customer care. Managers would also increasingly need to be engaged with so to enable their role as a community support and provide ensure that they are equipped with the skills to agree outcomes with residents.
- Further consideration of accountability issues would need to be undertaken as a result of increased future co-production, which was likely to blur the lines between officers and residents.
- Further consideration needed to be given to the term engagement, which should essentially mean power sharing rather than consultation.
- Further clarity was needed around the big society to ensure better understanding of this concept.