

## **VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Thursday 22 June 2023**

**PRESENT:** Councillor S. Smith (Chair); Councillors Jackson and Sheerin, Mary Adekugbe (Nigeria Community Association), Sohail Ahmed (Deeplish Community Centre), Ryan Bradley (Rochdale AFC Community Trust), Sarah Lageard (Co-Production & Engagement Officer, Adult Social Care), Javed Rehman (Bridging Communities), Emma Salloway (Neighbourhood Cohesion & Community Centres Engagement Officer), Lucy Smith (Business in the Community), Kathy Thomas (Rochdale Connections Trust), Liz Windsor-Welsh (Action Together) and Mark Wynn (HMR Circle)

**OFFICERS:** K. Davies (Governance and Committee Services)

#### **1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed those present and attendees introduced themselves.

#### **2 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dearnley and Emsley, Naomi Burke (Healthwatch Rochdale), Ghulam Shahzad (Rochdale Environmental Action Group) and Val White (Townships & Communities Manager).

#### **3 MINUTES**

##### **Resolved:**

That the Minutes of the Voluntary Sector Partnership meeting held on 24 January 2023 be approved as a correct record.

#### **4 COMMUNITY CO-OPERATIVE CONSORTIUM**

The Partnership received a presentation from the Chief Executive at Action Together.

Members were reminded that at the last meeting it was agreed not to set up a formal consortium, but instead focus on forming partnerships that would work collaboratively to spot opportunities and develop strategic / larger-scale bids that supports Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) activity across the borough.

The Chief Executive, Action Together, informed the Partnership that for the strategic bidding to be a success:

- There would need to be one organisation that meets the criteria of the fund (i.e. turnover rules) to act as the lead. The lead organisation would have to manage risk and cash flow;
- Each opportunity would need the capacity to write a bid;
- The right people must be involved - each must add something to the specific focus of the fund but also think about equalities, geographical spread, different types of services, etc.;

- Early notice would be key for those involved to have time to build trust and relationships.

The next step for progression would be for VCFSE organisations and the public sector to work together to identify, share and create spaces for collaboration.

The Partnership identified how VCFSE organisations and the public sector currently work together in the Rochdale Borough and it was acknowledged that there were already opportunities in place that could aid with achieving larger-scale bids. For example, the GMCA Multiplier Grants, Winter Pressures funding, VRU community-led initiatives, and the Creative People and Partnerships funding.

The Chair highlighted the need to work in partnership with Rochdale Borough Council to secure bids. The Chief Executive, Action Together, highlighted that legal officers, those who managed risks, and those with experience of strategic bids would be the most beneficial, however that the need to be clear about how the Council could assist would be essential to ensure that bids did not come to a halt.

It was also noted that it was essential to work together in advance of strategic bidding opportunities to minimise the barriers that could prevent the Partnership from putting in a strategic bid (where this is often a tight timeframe).

**Resolved:**

1. That the presentation be noted;
2. That Action Together contact Rochdale Borough Council to understand how the Council and Voluntary Sector Partnership could work collaboratively on strategic bidding opportunities in future;
3. That barriers in relation to strategic bids be identified and explored at the next Voluntary Sector Partnership meeting;
4. That the Policy Advisor, Rochdale Borough Council, be invited to the next Voluntary Sector Partnership meeting.

**5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair informed those present that Robin Parker's funeral would be held at Middleton Crematorium on Thursday 29 June. Mr Parker was a former Mayor of Rochdale and also a Voluntary Sector Partnership member.

It was noted by Councillor Billy Sheerin that Vera Hirst would celebrate her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday soon. A volunteer who devoted 48 years to voluntary services, Ms. Hirst would receive a civic visit from the Mayor of Rochdale to celebrate.

Mark Wynn informed the Partnership that HMR Circle had recently taken over management of The Strand Community Hub. Space at the Hub was now available to rent or let.

**Resolved:**

That the next meeting of Voluntary Sector Partnership be hosted at The Strand Community Hub, Kirkholt.

**6 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the 2023/24 meetings of Voluntary Sector Partnership will be held from 10.00am – 12.00pm on the following dates:

- Thursday 21 September 2023
- Thursday 25 January 2024
- Thursday 21 March 2024

Venues for January and March 2024 are yet to be confirmed but further information would be circulated to Members from the Clerk as soon as possible.