

VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES OF MEETING Thursday 11th July 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Janet Emsley, Councillor Ashley Dearnley, Councillor Linda Robinson, Alistair Sheldrick, Kathy Thomas, Mary Burke, Sheila Acton, Emma Salloway, Kerry Bertram, Pat Colclough and Sohail Ahmad

OFFICERS: Alison James (Resources Directorate)

84 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP FOR 2019/2020

It was **agreed** that Councillor Janet Emsley be appointed Chair of the Voluntary Sector Partnership for 2019/2020.

(Councillor Emsley in the Chair)

85 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Heakin, Bev Place, Lorraine Fairclough, Khadija Tily, Ann Stott, Marenka Vossen, Molly Brown and Kerry Edwards.

86 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2019 were considered.

It was commented that matters relating to funding for those community centres that had closed or were due to close had not been included in the minutes and that an answer to this question was still being sought.

It was **agreed** that subject to the inclusion of the matters relating to community centre funding as detailed above, that the minutes of the meeting of the Voluntary Sector Partnership held on 9th April 2019 be approved as a correct record.

87 EXPERIENCES OF ASYLUM AND SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES IN NORTH WEST ENGLAND - UPDATE (ALISTAIR SHELDRIK)

Alistair Sheldrick provided an update on the project he was managing relating to experiences of asylum and social welfare services in North West England.

The project aimed to:

- Record everyday impacts of Government policy on asylum management and benefits/welfare in Rochdale;
- Record service users, service providers, and policy-makers experiences/perspectives;
- Develop an evidence-base - highlighting issues, innovations, and value of local services.

In 2017-2018, this was based in two local drop-in support centres – Petrus and Nestac and consisted of observations and interviews with staff, volunteers, and service users.

Issues had been identified around move on and Universal Credit and new asylum housing contracts due to be introduced in September 2019. Serco had been awarded the 10-year contract in the North West.

Local issues/ areas for improvement had been identified as:-

- Location of asylum-seeker/refugee population across borough neighbourhoods;
- Serco now attending meetings, but the location of asylum housing in the borough not shared;
- Education and health access;
- Clear promotion of services for referrals and signposting pathways;
- Orientation on arrival for all Refugees/Asylum-seekers
- Awareness and support for destitution (initial and final negative decisions);
- 'Move on period' (following positive decision) and Universal Credit;
- Better promotion and awareness of services for signposting/referrals;
- Greater engagement/co-operation with Serco (Asylum housing provider).

It was **agreed** that the presentation be noted.

88 DIPPY ON TOUR (COUNCILLOR EMSLEY)

Councillor Emsley provided an update on Dippy on Tour.

Dippy was due to be in Rochdale from 10th February 2020 to 28th June 2020 with activities and events taking place at both Number One Riverside and Touchstones.

The current position was:

- Heritage Lottery Fund monies had been secured to support delivery of Dippy on Tour across both venues;
- Sponsorship in kind (including publicity) or in real terms towards the costs from a number of sources had been secured including TFGM and Manchester Airport;
- The project plan, including layouts at Number 1 Riverside and Touchstones was being finalised;
- Lots of partners have and will be involved, including the community;
- It will be one of the biggest things to happen to the borough and is a fantastic opportunity to create a legacy;
- There will be massive media interest as this is the only council building to host Dippy and not seen as a traditional 'venue';
- Everyone was encouraged to get involved.

Community Volunteers

- Working with Action Together and others to recruit 100+ volunteers to support Dippy's stay;
- Will work alongside Council and Link4Life staff and staff volunteers as our Dippyplomats over 20 weeks;
- Assisting to create an exceptional visitor experience;

Volunteer Roles:

- Help Desk and Reception
 - Retail
 - School Engagement
 - Visitor Engagement
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- Recruitment from Rochdale community from September through Link4Life;
 - Training and support provided, including carbon literacy training;
 - Signposting to other volunteering opportunities;
 - Volunteers needed commit to minimum 4 hours per week.

It was **agreed** that the presentation be noted.

89 ACTION TOGETHER UPDATE (KERRY BERTRAM)

Kerry Bertram, Strategic Locality Lead for Rochdale, from Action Together introduced the work that Action Together was currently involved in and plans for future areas of work.

Action Together aimed to provide infrastructure and assist with funding, training and promoting and developing the value of the community and voluntary sector.

There were in excess of 1500 voluntary and community groups in the Borough and Action Together was looking to build its membership.

Action Together was based at the Offices in Drake Street formerly occupied by the CAB.

A workshop was taking place with representatives from Community Centres following this meeting of the Voluntary Sector Partnership.

It was **agreed** that the presentation be noted.

90 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meetings of the Voluntary Sector Partnership would take place as follows:-

- 19th September 2019 at 10am
- 14th November 2019 at 10am
- 20th February 2019 at 10am