**Public and Voluntary Sectors’ Partnership Away Day 2017**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2017 at the Vine Church, Ilford**

**12.15-2.30 pm**

**Present:**

LBR: Cllr Littlewood (outgoing Vice Chair)

Vol Sector: John Garlick (outgoing Chair), Jon Pushkin, Sudarshan Bhuhi, Jon Abrams, Bushra Tahir

CCG: Khalil Ali

NELFT: Maria Thorn (incoming Chair)

Police: Elise Gellatley

**Apologies:**

Nigel Turner, Nicholas Hurst, Cllr Sharma, Cllr White, Frazer Ferguson, Narinder Dail, Bob Edwards.

**In Attendance:**

Cllr L Huggett, Mayor of Redbridge and her Consort (present for items 1 – 5)

Edith Galliers, LBR

Simon Parker, LBR

Ross Diamond, RedbridgeCVS

1. Introductions and Welcome

John Garlick welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The outgoing Chair, John Garlick, reminded those present that the role of the Chair of the Partnership is rotated each year between the public and voluntary sectors. This year it was the turn of the public sector to Chair the meetings. Maria Thorn was unanimously elected as Chair for 2017/18 (proposed by Cllr Bob Littlewood and seconded by Khalil Ali). Jon Pushkin was unanimously elected Vice Chair (proposed by Bushra Tahir and seconded by John Garlick).

At this stage of the meeting, Maria Thorn took over the chairing of the meeting. She thanked the outgoing Chair, and John Turkson from LBR, who had previously supported these meetings. John Garlick echoed these words, and thanked RedbridgeCVS for its ongoing support of this Partnership.

1. Compact Ambassador Ceremony

Ross Diamond reminded everyone present of the function of the Redbridge Compact, and of the Partnership’s role in drafting and overseeing this. He reminded the meeting that the Compact Champions group meet as necessary to manage any possible disputes and to ensure that awareness of the Compact remains high in each of their sectors/organisations. He said that once again Redbridge’s Mayor has agreed to take on the role of Compact Ambassador for the year. In accepting this role for 2017/18, Cllr Linda Huggett, Mayor of Redbridge, gave a speech in which she said that Redbridge is rightly proud of its strong history of partnership working and how this is more important than ever at this time of financial constraint. She noted that Redbridge’s Compact document gives guidance on *how* partnership working with the voluntary sector can be undertaken, but also explains *why* it is important. Cllr Huggett also talked about the local charities she is supporting as Mayor this year. These are Haven House Hospice for children and St Francis Hospice. She concluded by noting the relevance of Redbridge’s motto: “In Unity Progress.”

1. Minutes of last year’s meeting

4.1. Accuracy

These were agreed as an accurate record – with the amendment that Khalil Ali was not *Dr* Ali.

4.2. Matters Arising

All actions had been undertaken.

Ross gave an update on Social Prescribing, which had been the subject of a presentation at last year’s Away Day. A scheme covering the Fairlop Locality of the borough was now being developed, with all the GP practices in the Fairlop GP Locality Network being invited to make referrals to RedbridgeCVS who employ “Health and Wellbeing Buddies” to work with the people referred, to help them access non-clinical interventions relating to diabetes, low level mental illness and social isolation. Everyone welcome this development – and Ross assured the meeting that robust evaluation was being developed in order to ensure value for money was demonstrated.

1. Presentation: Building A New Partnership, Simon Parker (LBR Corporate Director of Strategy).

Simon explained that he had been in post almost one year now and has been overseeing lots of changes within the Council. He said that the Council has to change to ensure it is financially sustainable, but he believes that things can be done differently *and* better. His Directorate includes Policy (led by Edith Galliers whose remit includes equalities and working with the voluntary sector), Transformation, Communications, Customer Services (where big changes are now being implemented), the development of a new Data Hub and a new focus on Community Cohesion. With regards to Cohesion, he said that Redbridge is currently very cohesive, but this needs to be nurtured carefully by LBR. He has done a lot of work with Councillors and Council staff and now hopes to be able to more outward looking. He is working on ‘refreshing’ LBR’s Strategies including a focus on how the borough might look in 2025, and working on a new Borough Plan, in partnership with the voluntary sector (via RedbridgeCVS), the NHS and the police.

Simon said there is a paradox of there being less funding available for LBR to spend on grants and support for the voluntary and community sector, but more need for the sector. He said that the voluntary and community sector provides vital advocacy for local people, early intervention services and helps build strong communities. He is keen for LBR to support this – including by working with the sector to help co-produce services and solutions to problems. He asked how the voluntary sector wanted to be engaged, and how LBR could improve the way it worked with the sector. He also wanted voluntary organisations to think about ways they could work better in partnership, including through the use of digital tools (eg for referral pathways).

Su Bhuhi asked if LBR could work harder to ensure that it commissioned more of its services from local voluntary organisations, who added value to the services they were procured to provide – saying that the design of procurement processes was key. Khalil Ali asked how LBR is working with the planned 3-borough Accountable Care System and the 8-borough STP (which is now called the East London Health and Care Partnership). Simon said more was needed in these areas – and added that the STP was proving hard to pin down, as its structure seemed to change regularly. Khalil added that the GP Locality Networks work closely with the Social Service Localities but need to work more closely with the voluntary sector. The Social Prescribing work being developed in Fairlop was a very positive start to this. John Garlick said that the voluntary sector is always keen to work in new ways, and said that it provides excellent value for money, including via its use of volunteers. He suggested that – as has been discussed in the past – Redbridge could benefit from a Voluntary Sector Hub, with a range of key voluntary sector service providers sharing premises. He said that LBR should be more proactive in counting the value of local volunteers and should involve the sector more in its budget setting processes. Jon Pushkin stressed the value of the sector in preventing or delaying illnesses and greater needs from developing, as spending on this work saves money in the medium and long term. Su said that people are now recognising that austerity is real and deep, and there is a willingness to try new approaches. She did warn however, that too much co-location and streamlining can lead to reductions in the range of ways that people can access services. She said that many access points were preferable to a single point of entry for services.

Simon thanked everyone for the comments and questions and said he hoped this Partnership would help consider these further during the year ahead. Edith asked how LBR could help the voluntary sector prepare for when the grants pot is further reduced. Su and John said that a ‘Hub’ with a number of key voluntary organisations could help the sector save money and provide effective services. Edith suggested looking at ‘virtual’ Hubs – and Ross said that the Redbridge Advice Network has just this model.

Jon Abrams said that the reality was that there was no funding available for preventative work, as all the available money was needed for providing crisis services to those already in need and that talk of things getting better was not realistic. He predicted that more local voluntary organisations would go under as further cuts were implemented. He said that LBR’s commissioning had, in the past, been poor and the Social Value Act is still not being properly implemented here, despite the PaVSP promoting this for many years. Jon said that talk of “co-production” wasn’t backed up in practice and the Disability Charter, as promised by the Fairness Commission, was now on hold. He said it would be better for Local Authorities and NHS bodies to state clearly that central government is not allowing them to spend what is necessary. Edith accepted that more cuts were coming, but asked how we might work together to prepare for this. Jon said that neither the voluntary sector nor service users are fully involved in decision making and are not treated as equals. Simon said he understood Jon’s position, but said his team were new, so should be judged on how they perform in future, not by the past.

The Chair thanked Simon for leading the discussion and said the PaVSP was ideally placed to help continue these discussions.

1. PaVSP Annual Report 2016/17

Ross presented the draft PaVSP Annual Report and it was formally agreed – subject to changing the reference to the “Redbridge Police” to say “Metropolitan Police” as a result of the police restructuring undertaken during the year.

**Action: RD to amend and circulate final report. Partners to be encouraged to put this on their websites etc.**

1. Work Plan for 2017/18

Ross reminded the Partnership that it meets 3 times per year (in addition to the away day) and the members were asked to agree how they wished to use the meetings this year. The following items were discussed:

* There had previously been a standing item on each agenda for a voluntary group to give a presentation about its work. It was agreed that this would not be a standing item this year.
* It was agreed that there would again be a standing item on the Fairness Commission recommendations and the progress being delivered. Cllr Littlewood would lead on this item.
* It was agreed that the first meeting would include an item on public sector commissioning and procurement.
* It was agreed that a future meeting would include an item on the NHS Accountable Care System that is being developed across Redbridge, Havering and Barking & Dagenham.
* It was agreed that a future meeting would include an item on community cohesion and the work being led by LBR on this.

Ross would liaise with the Chair regarding the agendas and guests to be invited.

**Action: RD and MT to agree agendas.**

**Action: RD to circulate the PaVSP Terms of Reference to all members.**

1. Any other business

There was none.

1. Dates of future meetings

Ross will liaise with Edith regarding Council diaries and set the dates (in agreement with the Chair). These are likely to be held at RedbridgeCVS’ offices in Cranbrook Road Ilford) at 5 pm on Wednesdays.

 **Action: RD to agree suitable dates and circulate these as soon as possible.**

CLOSE.