

10<sup>th</sup> December 2015

**REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE PEOPLE BOARD**

**Community Inclusion and support for the Washington VCS including volunteering**

The People Board recommends the following action:

1. The current Community and Volunteer Support Project (Washington Trust) be evaluated – the Trust to submit a summary of all activity
2. Desktop evaluation of outputs and milestones to identify refocus and retargeting required
3. Any reprofiling of the current budget (Year 2) be approved by the Area Co-ordinator
4. Area Committee to discuss any issues and agree to align additional funding to support further development of the approach.
5. The Board has identified:
  - a. The project could and does support the council's journey with regards to our partners doing more
  - b. The project is successful and is good at what it does and is keen to grow the informal groups to become more structured and stronger - but it has taken a year to realise the initial focus on CAs has not been successful
  - c. The project could build further ties to the Washington Area Network's aspirations re the mentoring/peer support by larger organisations for smaller informal groups.
  - d. The current post could take on or facilitate further opportunities - to deliver elements of other Area Committee funded projects making it about additionality rather than another post or another organisation. Whilst at the same time assisting with sustaining a project the Area Committee has already invested in.
  - e. The volunteering element of the current project is now growing and it needs a real push - again this will help be able to contribute to the Council's agenda. The gap in this element is the deployment of volunteers and there needs to be a longer term plan.
  - f. The Washington Trust would also be required to access additional funding to present a sustainable approach
6. Area Committee is requested to consider a targeted approach rather than an open call for projects to sustain this project, and is requested to align SIB 2015/16 budget to develop this proposal

**Summary of CVDO activity to date (as at end of October 2015)**

The CVDO project has two specific areas of activity: to provide a community development support offer to voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations operating within Washington and co-ordinating and developing volunteer opportunities.

**Community Development**

The CVDO project is currently supporting a range of community groups across Washington. These groups include:

- Community centre based organisations such as Harraton, Springwell Village VC
- Environmental groups
- Tenant and Resident Associations

- Issue specific groups e.g. litter
- A growing number of community groups which aim to support schools

The CVDO project is providing the following forms of support and assistance to community groups:

- Development of appropriate governance arrangements
- Support to develop internal procedures and processes such as safeguarding and risk assessment
- Fund-raising advice and assistance (the project has supported 6 new groups to secure funding for the first time)
- Project development e.g. Rickleton Park
- Volunteer support/development
- IT and social media development – the project manages a volunteer whom provides other volunteers with social media and web-site development advice and support

To date (end of October 2015) the CVDO has, in worked directly with **20 small community organisations** operating within Washington. These groups have ranged from relatively well established organisations such as Springwell Village Community Venue, Harraton & District Community Association to new and emerging groups such as The Friends of Rickleton Primary School and Springwell Ladybirds. This activity has brought the project into direct contact with over **100 individual volunteers**. From this overall figure, approximately 25% had not been part of a formal group before being supported by the CVDO project.

The CVDO has worked intensively **with 4 community organisations** to produce organisational reviews via the SWOT process. **A further 2 SWOT** reviews have been completed but with the organisation taking less of an active role in their production. With the support of the CVDO 8 new community groups have been formally established in Washington during year one. During the same period no community organisations operating within Washington have dissolved, though it is reasonable to say that several remain vulnerable. A great deal of work has taken place relating to grant aid in terms of building internal capacity to raise the levels of grant aid (external to the city Council) secured by the production of better applications. With the support of the CVDO 7 community groups have secured grant aid for the first time with a further 4 applying for non- city council funding for the first time.

#### Volunteer Support/Development

The CVDO project provides a range of volunteer development support and co-ordination services. Broadly speaking this can be described as:

- Acting as a point of contact for Washington residents whom wish to volunteer in their community and referring them on to CVS organisations which operate within the town
- Supporting VCS organisations in Washington to develop internal processes which allow them to more effectively recruit, appropriately manage, develop and support volunteers.
- Co-ordinate the Washington Volunteer Steering Group which is made up of the organisations in Washington with the largest numbers of volunteers (Gentoo, Sunderland City Council etc)
- Act as a point of contact for corporate volunteering activity. Currently the project is working with the Department of Work and Pensions and HM Revenues and Customs – both of which have allowed their staff to volunteer in Washington.
- Co-ordination a range of volunteer groups which pick litter across the town (some of these individual groups also receive community development support)

- Delivery of the Washington 100 Project which seeks to locate and manage 100 Washington residents to form a pool of volunteers.

The CVDO project has also worked to develop volunteering within Washington, in both terms of collectives and individuals.

- Over 20 volunteers, with no history of volunteering, have been supported by the CVDO project to take up volunteering roles within Washington in groups/organisations that are already operating. Additionally, over 30 individuals have been supported to volunteer in new groups which have been created during the past 12 months.
- A database has been created to manage the Washington 100 Volunteering Project. Work is continuing to identify and appropriately train, the individuals who collectively will form the Washington 100 volunteer pool. (41 recruited to date)
- The project has worked with 6 community organisations to help them host, support and manage volunteers by the development and introduction of a range of policies and procedures to make the organisation more “volunteer aware” and “volunteer friendly”. As part of this work the project has supported organisations to develop: volunteer policies (this is becoming more and more a requirement for grant aid). This activity helps their sustainability going forward in terms of both volunteer recruitment and retention.
- Corporate volunteering is, it is felt, an underutilized area of volunteering activity in Washington - The CVDO project, working both with Sunderland Volunteers Centre, but also on its own, has been actively developing an environment, and associated infrastructure, to make Washington a more attractive location for corporate volunteering. 3 corporate volunteering activities have taken place within year 1
- 4 volunteer training courses have been delivered by the CVDO.

**Recommendation: Area Committee is requested to consider a targeted approach rather than an open call for projects to sustain this project.**

**Members are requested to support the People Board recommendation to align £35,000 SIB 2015/16 budget to develop this proposal**