18 JUNE 2014

REPORT OF COALFIELD AREA VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR NETWORK

1.   Purpose of the Report
1.1   The report provides an update with regard to the Coalfield Area Voluntary and Community Sector Network

2.   Background
2.1   To develop the capacity and influence of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) across the City, Area Networks have been established and delegates represent each Area Network at Area Committee taking forward issues on behalf of the whole VCS in the area, reporting on area priority delivery by the VCS, and reporting back, providing a two-way flow of communication.

2.2   Coalfield Area Network delegates will present a report to each Area Committee meeting informing Members of activity, progress, issues and concerns of the sector.

3.   Coalfield Voluntary and Community Sector Network (VCSN) Progress Report

        The Coalfield VCSN has met twice since the last Area Committee in April 2014.

3.1   May 2014
        FACL - The group were given a presentation by Andrew McGuckian from Family, Adult and Community Learning (FACL) who outlined what FACL provides and how local VCS organisations can be involved as a training provider, a community venue or by identifying training needs within the local area.

        Andrew informed the group that FACL were in the process of developing service specifications for learning provision for the new academic year. Members of the network requested further information when available, in order that the provision meets the need in the locality.

        Since the meeting, a Call Out for training providers to deliver a range of funded courses has been posted on the NEPO portal, and the VCS Network members have received the information directly.

        Area Priorities for 2014/15 - Councillor Anne Lawson and Councillor John Scott attended the meeting and discussed the draft priorities for 2014/15 currently being developed by the People and Place Board. Members of the Network were asked for their input and to identify specific issues and actions against each of the draft priority subjects. Members of the Network were pleased to be given the opportunity to have an input to the process and welcome the idea of having an action plan which sits beneath the Area Committee Work Plan, in order they can support the delivery of the agreed priorities. The Area VCS Reps will continue the close working relationship with the Area Community Officer to support delivery of the priorities once agreed at the June 2014 Area Committee meeting.

        VCS Information 'Roadshow'
        The VCS Network members identified that there is lots of fantastic work going on within the community but often groups do not know what others are doing and what services they provide. It was agreed that an information sharing event would take place which would showcase what individual organisations do, and what the VCS do as a whole. Residents would be invited along to hear about a range of services and activities which they can take

part in. The work of Area Committee, the People and Place Boards, and local Councillors would also be promoted, with elected members being invited to come along to the event to speak to local groups and residents. A Steering Group was set up to take this work forward.

3.2   June 2014
All Together Sunderland
Sam Meredith, Corporate Communications, Sunderland City Council informed the meeting of the **All Together Sunderland** campaign. It is a campaign between the Council and partners, currently giving information and advice on 'making your money go further'. The campaign is in its early days and as it develops will focus on other themes and subjects including health and wellbeing. The Network members expressed their wish to ensure that other programmes and initiatives are taken into consideration during the development of the campaign so as not to duplicate local information sources and projects.

A WW1 Commemoration project has now been set up. HLF (Heritage Lottery Funding) and Area Committee SIB (Strategic Initiative Budget) funding will allow local groups and organisations to come together to plan and deliver a range of displays, activities and programmes to remember and mark the First World War. A total of 20 VCS groups and 5 schools are engaged in the local project and are planning a wide range of activities and events including an art project making ceramic poppies, a war memorial research project, a sewing project making WW1 costumes and show and tell events. A memory garden project launch in August 2014 will be attended by over 60 local school children. The VCS Network welcomes the opportunity to develop this project and request that Committee consider further SIB support to the Network to continue the project beyond 2014.

The Coalfield Community Roadshow will promote the work of local VCS organisations and partners, and give local residents the opportunity to find out what services and activities are available in their area. Each organisation will be requested to provide a 'stand' with relevant information and also prepare an activity or interactive information for local residents. It is proposed the event takes place on 25 October 2014 at the Hetton Centre and a small steering group made up of VCS Network members is planning the event. The Network would welcome the input from Area Committee, Place and People Boards and invite the Area Committee to design and prepare an information stand to display at the event.

3.3   Future meetings

4.   Recommendations
4.1   Members are requested
   - To note the contents of the report
   - To consider, through the Place and People Boards, continuation of SIB support for the WW1 programme
   - To add support to the development of a 'Coalfield Community Roadshow'
   - To provide an information stand for the 'Coalfield Community Roadshow'

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