

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**Strategic Priority: Attractive and Inclusive City**

**Corporate Improvement Objectives: CIO1: Delivering Customer Focused Services, CIO4: Improving Partnership working to deliver 'One City'**

**Corporate Outcomes:**

**1.5 - A city that cares for its most vulnerable**

**2.3 - Lasting and resilient neighbourhoods**

**4.1 - Elected members are community leaders at the core of decision making**

**4.2- Our communities, residents and businesses are at the centre of everything we do**

**4.5 - We value people's individual contributions to our collective goals**

**4.6- We are ambitious for the city and ourselves; we view all change as an opportunity; we celebrate and build on our past without being confined by it**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report provides an update to the Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Council's Community Development Service and work with the City's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) over 2011/2012.

**2.0 BACKGROUND / CONTEXT**

2.1 Community Development has a clear and lasting impact on every aspect of Sunderland life and positively affects physical, environmental and social health of communities by helping people to help themselves in regenerating communities, helping tackle crime, engaging those who are 'hard to reach' and raising achievement in our schools, colleges and university. Community Development activity is also key to building community resilience, bringing residents together to collectively manage shocks, respond to adversity and adapt to change.

2.2 Strong and sustainable Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (VCSOs) are essential partners in realising both the strategic and local area priorities for the city. The sector provides a wide range of valuable services within communities and contributes to improved outcomes for residents of Sunderland, including some of the most marginalised and vulnerable groups. VCSOs are an important source of expertise and local knowledge. They play a crucial role in the intelligent commissioning process by speaking on behalf service users and communities of place/ interest; with links into parts of the

community that public sector agencies can struggle to engage with, these organisations can help to ensure that unmet needs are recognised and addressed. The sector also provides opportunities for people to get involved in their community, supporting skills development, promoting active citizenship and strengthening social capital. (See Appendix 1 for further details of Sunderland's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)).

- 2.3 Sunderland has a strong culture and tradition of volunteering. All across our city people are giving their time to help others and to create a better future for everyone. Last year around one in four people (23% - Annual Residents Survey, 2010) were actively involved in some form of volunteering in Sunderland – donating their time and skills to groups, clubs and organisations from local charities and community groups to residents associations, schools, hospitals, parks, sports clubs, museums and galleries. Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship, as well as a way for people to build their skills and confidence.

### **3.0 SERVICE PROVISION**

- 3.1 Sunderland City Council wants people to live an active, independent life to the full. An important element of this includes the provision of a wide range of opportunities to participate in community activity. Such activity has a clear and lasting impact on every aspect of Sunderland life and positively affects the physical, social and environmental health of communities.
- 3.2 The primary aim of Community Development is to help build resilient and sustainable communities by helping people to help themselves and supporting VCSOs and civil participation through volunteering.
- 3.3 Community Development works to increase volunteering and active citizenship, encouraging participation by residents in their communities as well as providing lifelong learning opportunities, building skills and increasing educational attainment and employment opportunities.
- 3.4 Community Development also works to ensure that all our neighbourhoods have the right mix of facilities and services that meet the needs of local people through providing capacity building support to VCSOs to manage community assets and design and deliver public services. This includes providing governance, training and advice to VCSOs including intensive support to Community Associations via Service Level Agreements.
- 3.5 The aim has been and continues to be developed by implementing the following strategies and policies:
- Sunderland Volunteering Strategy
  - Council's Surplus Building Policy (Community Benefit)
  - Sunderland Compact and supporting Codes of Practice
- 3.6 The key drivers for Community Development are to:
- To increase volunteering and active citizenship

- Enable VCSOs to manage community assets and provide programmes of activity to meet local needs
- Support Area Arrangements, facilitating five Area VCS Networks to plan and deliver activities, initiatives and services linking into the Local Area Priorities and the Council's five Area Committees
- Increase community resilience by bringing residents together to tackle local issues and respond to change.
- Build the capacity of the VCS to develop entrepreneurial activity and design and deliver services
- Support the Council to develop new delivery mechanisms including the development of co-operatives, mutuals and social enterprises

### 3.7 Services provided by Community Development include:

- Providing clear links between the range of partners for seamless pathways for sustaining participation.
- Working with key partners, the VCS, Area VCS Networks, and other organisations to build capacity and promote participation opportunities
- Providing workforce development opportunities and supporting VCSOs to be sustainable and capable of being commissioned to deliver services
- Developing the capacity of partners and residents to reach their potential and be capable of engaging with Olympic and Paralympic Games 2012 legacy agenda.
- Building and sustaining a sense of community by providing high quality community opportunities in neighbourhood settings that correspond to community needs.
- Raising the profile of volunteering across the city and creating key routes that support individuals into volunteering opportunities, community learning and employment.
- Providing information, advice, support, training and management systems to develop effective governance in VCSOs
- Supporting the operation and development of area based facilities providing opportunities for all ages and all interest groups in the community
- Supporting the development work of geographical communities and communities of identity

Appendix 2 provides a detailed Function Specification for Community Development.

- ### 3.8
- Following the introduction of the Council's new Business Operating Model, the Community Development Team, Community Services has merged with Sport and Leisure to become 'Sport, Leisure and Community Development'. The 'Sport, Leisure and Community Development' service structure is shown in Appendix 3.

- 3.9 Community Development's main service base is Jack Crawford House, but also manages services from Washington Millennium, Sandhill and the Hetton Centres.

#### **4.0 AREA VCS NETWORKS**

- 4.1 Community Development engages with the VCS and Elected Members on an ongoing basis primarily through the Area VCS Networks which consist of representatives from VCSOs across the City and are co- chaired by a VCS representative and by the Councillor Vice-Chair of Area Committee. VCS Organisations are consulted on and deliver against Local Area Plan priorities and the Networks provide three representatives to Area Committee, ensuring a two-way flow of communication between the VCS and Area Committee. (See Appendix 4 for the Area VCS Network Structure. Terms of Reference for the Area VCS Network are given in Appendix 5).

- 4.2 380 people attended Area VCS Network meetings from April – November 2011 inclusive. In addition there are many organisations which are unable to attend all meetings but are involved in a 'virtual network', which Area Community Co-ordinators support on a regular basis.

- 4.3 In relation to satisfaction levels associated with Community Development and delivery of Area VCS Networks, levels of VCSO satisfaction can be measured through the National Survey of Charities and Social Enterprises. Results from 2010 show Sunderland higher than the national average for VCSO satisfaction levels with regards to their ability to influence local decisions that are relevant to them (18% compared to 16% nationally) and the support available to them in their local area (33% compared to 24% nationally).

- 4.4 In addition, this part of the service has received customer feedback through the Thriving VCS Survey (2011), carried out by the service in collaboration with Voluntary and Community Action Sunderland (VCAS) and Sunderland Community Network. The purpose of the research was to understand what a 'thriving VCS' looks like from the VCS perspective, whether this currently exists in Sunderland, and if not, how the Council, its partners and VCSOs can achieve this in the City. The survey results indicate that:

The five Area VCS Networks, facilitated by the service, are operating effectively and should be maintained and further developed as a mechanism for engagement with the sector. The majority of respondents (61%) attend an Area VCS Network meeting on a regular basis, and 62% find these meetings useful for their organisation.

Specific examples of progress and achievements of Community Development in relation to the Area VCS Networks over the last year are detailed below:

- 4.5 Sunderland Star Award – Partnership of the Year 2011  
Locally, the significant contribution of Community Development team members to the City was highlighted when the Coalfield Area Community Co-ordinator, Susan Brown, was awarded a Sunderland Star Award for

Partnership of the Year 2011 in recognition of her work in the Coalfield area, particularly around the Coalfield in Bloom Project.

- 4.6 Through the Coalfields VCS Network, VCS organisations responded to Coalfield Attractive and Inclusive priorities through the Coalfield in Bloom Project. With support and guidance from the Coalfield Area Community Co-ordinator, VCS organisations worked together with the Council and other Sunderland Partnership organisations in an Area Committee Task and Result Group to plant bulbs in the area.
- 4.7 £4500 was received from Gentoo, with an additional £1700 coming from Coalfield Area Committee Community Chest, and Easington Lane Community Action Point (ELCAP) agreed to be the VCS lead on the project. 20 VCS organisations, 6 Resident Groups, 9 Faith Groups and 5 Public Sector Partners, 19 Schools and around 300 volunteers were involved in the project to plant 3200 bulbs.
- 4.8 This 'Responsive Local Service' has been a catalyst for greater community involvement and cohesion as different sectors of the community (e.g. older people and younger people) have come together through a shared community vision and learning experience.
- 4.9 The 'Coalfield in Bloom' community project is one example of this service areas contribution to the City of Sunderland and it has inspired local people to come together to work with the Council and Partners to make a real difference in their community.
- 4.10 VCS Consultation  
Community Development has continued to support the Council and partners to consult Sunderland's VCS through the Area VCS Networks, which are increasingly becoming a 'clearing house' for VCS contact across the City. For example Community Development has given guidance and support on carrying out consultations with Area VCS Networks on Nexus transport, the future provision of Information, Advice and Guidance, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Council Budget. These have directly led to improvements in service provision, for example, Information Advice and Guidance Workshops engagement with the East VCS Network has led to a pilot project being delivered in the East area with VCS organisations interested in becoming point of contact centres.
- 4.11 Scrutiny Committee Representation  
Community Development is in the process of identifying Area VCS Network representatives for the Scrutiny function to enable the Sector to be appropriately represented on Scrutiny Committees. The representation will add value to Scrutiny policy reviews when appropriate.
- 4.12 Love Where You Live  
Community Development has been working in partnership with the Council's Responsive Local Services Team on the Love Where You Live Campaign. The three year campaign, backed by Keep Britain Tidy aims to inspire

everyone to think about their communities and take action to reduce litter in the locations where they live, the places they visit and the spaces that they use. It is about everyone taking responsibility - individuals, local authorities, VCS organisations, government and multi national companies to change the way people think and act about littering and work together to make change happen.

4.13 Community Development has been supporting VCSOs and volunteers to get involved in the Campaign through the Area VCS Networks. As a result of joint work between Community Development and Responsive Local Services more than 800 people, including volunteers, school children and businesses have taken part in a series of community makeovers, cleanups and bulb planting events across every ward of the City since the Campaign's launch in September 2011.

#### 4.14 Heritage

Community Development is supporting the recently recruited Community Heritage Development Officer to liaise with VCSOs in the North and Coalfields area of the City, introducing them to the North and Coalfields Area VCS Networks and supporting them to develop partnership community heritage projects.

#### 4.15 North

- River Rubbish Relay, January 2011 -Volunteers walked along the C2C cycle path along the River Wear from the Billy Hardy Centre in Castletown to the National Glass Centre, collecting litter and learning about local history on the way. Volunteers were rewarded with entertainment and refreshments at the National Glass Centre after collectively managing to fill more than 35 bags of rubbish. Following the event's success, a second event took place in June 2011.
- Mayor's Family Fun Day, Thompson Park , July 2011 – The Community Chest funded event involved a collaboration of VCS organisations during 'I love Parks week' including SAFC, NE Sports CIC, SNYP, Thompson Park CA, Groundworks NE, Thompson Park Bowling Club. Participating VCSOs were given the opportunity to showcase what they do and how they can be involved as a participant or volunteer.

#### 4.16 East

- Ryhope Beach Party, July 2011 - collaboration of VCS organisations including Durham Heritage provided a community event. Despite adverse weather conditions the event went ahead in Ryhope CA with pirates, mermaids, fishing, football, street theatre, messy play and face painting.
- Grangetown Green Space Opening - As part of the Greenspace Consultation a piece of green space was identified as not accessible to the local community - through the East VCS Network the greenspace was opened and a family fun day was held in February 2011 to launch the opening with VCS organisations delivering projects such as junior football, tag rugby, junior fishing, junior cricket, bike project.

- Youth Task & Finish Group from Area Committee with input from East VCS Network led to a call for projects with funding from Area Committee to deliver play and holiday provision in the East
- Coastal Path Task & Finish Group from Area Committee with input from East VCS Network has discussed and recommended options for the coastal path through Sunderland

#### 4.17 West

- The Health Champions project was delivered in the West.
- All VCS Youth groups participate in the Youth & Play Task & Finish group which has resulted in an excellent collaboration to deliver holiday activities in the West for 8- 12 year olds and young people aged 13 plus.

#### 4.18 Washington

- The Health Champions project was delivered in Washington.
- Washington NEET project – a collaborative bidding exercise has led the Sector to look at other ways it can bid for funding to support the activities they deliver to Washington residents.
- Carers project- To address carers' issues under the Health Area Priority, a consultation evening was organised with the Carers Centre for members and carers, enabling carers to share the issues first hand and have the opportunity to influence future Council decisions. A number of actions are being followed up from the event, including the production of a Carers' Card with essential contact numbers including a 24hr emergency number. The SIB funded card has been a great success, leading to an increase in contacts with the Carers Centre.
- Collaborative working – Springwell Village Hall is now mentoring Harraton CA in development and operation of their policies and procedures. A number of VCS organisations with premises and VCS organisations delivering activities in those premises have been supported to work together.
- Groups were supported to bid for SIB Holiday Activity Funding for 13 to 19 yr olds and for general activities for 8 to 12 yr olds ensuring activity was funded in all wards.

#### 4.19 Coalfield

- The development of the Coalfield Community Challenge Project, funded through SIB, emerged from the success of the Coalfield in Bloom and provides a mechanism to enable the local community to influence and deliver area priorities selected by Area Committee. The project is supporting the promotion of local Heritage and the improvement of allotments and community gardens which is progressing exceptionally well. This is due to the success of various events and learning programmes which attracted greater than expected input and involvement from community groups and volunteers.

- Junior Fencing at St John's was supported to look at sporting activity as well as delivering sessions over 10 weeks with youth workers and local people in the Fence Houses area.
- The Hetton History Group was supported in their collection of both visual and audio recordings on the History of Hetton and has published several for the Christmas events. A Coalfield Heritage Calendar has also been published.

## **5.0 VOLUNTEERING**

5.1 Community Development is working to implement the Sunderland Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan (adopted by Cabinet February 2011). The Strategy aims to support volunteering in Sunderland by:

- Increasing the number and diversity of people volunteering in Sunderland
- Recognising and rewarding volunteers
- Supporting volunteer confidence, learning, skills and employability
- Increasing the number of Employer-Supported Volunteering Schemes
- Improving volunteer management and volunteering programmes

Examples of Community Development progress and achievements in relation to volunteering over the last year or so are given below:

### **5.2 Area Volunteer Celebration Events**

In recognition of the valuable contribution volunteers make to areas of the City and to raise the profile of volunteering at an area level, Area Volunteer Celebration Events were initiated in February 2010. Co-ordinated by the Community Development Team, the events are hosted by Area Committee Chair and Vice Chairs and the Area VCS Network representatives and take place in venues across each area of the City.

- 5.3 At the initial events, refreshments were followed by an opening speech from the Chair of Area Committee and then a presentation of certificates and gifts to nominated volunteers by the Chair and Vice Chair, including a photo opportunity.
- 5.4 Volunteers could be nominated for awards by the VCS organisations they supported. Following the events, nominees were selected through the Area VCS Networks and supported by Area Community Co-ordinators to attend the City-wide Annual Volunteer Celebration event, hosted by the Mayor, during national Volunteers' Week.
- 5.5 The format of the Area Volunteer Celebration events has evolved since the initial events in February 2010. For example, the West Area held a Christmas Volunteer Celebration event in December 2010 to celebrate and recognise the work of volunteers from a range of local VCS organisations. Nominated volunteers were invited to attend a Christmas Lunch at Thorney Close Action



and Enterprise Centre. The event was funded through a Community Chest grant.

- 5.6 The number of volunteers involved in the Area Volunteer Celebrations has also grown over time, from a total of 140 volunteers participating in the February 2010 events to over 260 volunteers participating in the Christmas 2010 events<sup>1</sup>. Further events are being planned.

5.7 Employee Volunteering Opportunities

Following a successful pilot project in January 2011, Community Development has been liaising with Volunteering England and developing a partnership with Skillsbridge towards the development of Council Employee Volunteering Opportunities. Skillsbridge is a new and innovative programme developed by North East Enterprise Bond (NEEB) which aims to deliver bespoke, sustainable skills and expertise from the private/ public sector to the Voluntary and Community Sector through professional volunteering. Community Development are currently liaising with HR, Commercial and Corporate Services, to consider whether the Council's current Learning Credit scheme could be utilised to provide opportunities for employees to volunteer with VCS organisations

5.8 European Year of Volunteering 2011

Community Development's work on Volunteering has also been internationally acknowledged, with Sunderland being the only U.K. City represented at the European Year of Volunteering 2011 Madrid en Red Project. The project was brokered through the EUROCITIES network. All participating cities – Madrid (the lead city), Lisbon, Munich and Sunderland are member cities. The project was approved for funding by the EU's Europe for Citizens Programme in December 2010.

As part of the project, Community Development led a delegation of young people from VCS organisations across the City to Madrid to share their experiences and learn more about youth volunteering.

**6.0 SURPLUS BUILDING POLICY (COMMUNITY BENEFIT)**

- 6.1 Implementation of the Surplus Building Policy (Community Benefit) (adopted April 2011) ensures that a mix of Council owned community facilities across the City are effectively managed by Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations.

- 6.2 Several new and emerging groups across the City are applying for community assets and many existing groups are applying for lease renewals through the policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Christmas 2010 Area Volunteering events include the East, West and Coalfield area events. A North event took place in June 2011 with over 30 people attending.

## **7.0 VCS SUPPORT**

- 7.1 The results from the Thriving VCS Survey are being used to influence policy and strategy as well as future service delivery in relation to supporting the local VCS and helping VCSOs to help themselves and each other.
- 7.2 Many respondents to the Thriving VCS Survey used the questionnaire as opportunity to express their satisfaction with the support available to their organisation from local sources including the Council. The majority of respondents (64%) are satisfied with overall support provided by Sunderland City Council staff and the Community Development Team were specifically praised for their support e.g.:

*“We get good support from the Community Development Team.”*

*“Would like to thank the Community Development Team for their continued support.”*

## **8.0 VCS FUNDING**

- 8.1 Community Development has continued to support the local VCS to access funding opportunities through provision of information, advice, guidance and signposting to further support.
- 8.2 In addition, Community Development has awarded £5623.90 Play Grant Award funding to 14 VCS organisations and £52,680.66 through Service Level Agreements to 17 Community Associations in 2011/12.

## **9.0 OVERALL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE**

- 9.1 Evidence of how Community Development has improved the capacity of the Voluntary and Community Sector can be demonstrated through the 2010 National Survey of Charities and Social Enterprises (see Appendix 6). The results indicate that, compared to 2008 levels, the capacity of the Sector has generally increased, although it is clear that further work needs to be done to ensure that the Sector is thriving and resilient, particularly in these challenging economic circumstances.

## **10.0 2012 – 2013 FOCUS**

- 10.1 The environment in which the service operates is constantly changing and is a reflection of the current economic climate and the changing expectations of our customers and central government.
- 10.2 The Coalition Government’s agenda has highlighted ongoing work the Service has carried out to increase levels of volunteering in the City. The Service is already well placed to deliver through its ongoing implementation

of the Sunderland Compact's Volunteering Code of Practice, the Volunteering Strategy and its links with partners through the Active Sunderland Board and the Sunderland Volunteering Forum. However, the '2012 in Sunderland' programme, Sunderland's response to the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, presents a unique opportunity for the Service to build a 'Volunteering Bank' (a larger cohort of skilled volunteers), leaving a legacy of volunteering in sport, arts, culture and the community for years to come.

- 10.3 The Government's Localism agenda and associated community funding initiatives is shifting the focus of service delivery to a neighbourhood, rather than a city-wide or Area based level. The Service is already responding to these changes – for example, by supporting Elected Members to become involved in Community First Panels, ensuring activity complements and adds value to Local Area Plans. The Service is currently considering how these Panels will link into the wider Area VCS Networks.
- 10.4 The Government's Localism Act, particularly the Right to Challenge and Right to Buy, will provide VCSOs with the opportunity to take over the delivery of Council services and community assets where appropriate. Arrangements are already in place to support VCSOs to take over the management of Council owned Community Assets, supported through the implementation of the Surplus Building Policy (Community Benefit). The Service also provides capacity building support to VCSOs to enable them to contribute to the design and delivery of local services; however, it is clear that further work needs to be done to enable this, especially around developing the capacity of smaller VCS organisations to deliver.
- 10.5 The global economic downturn and resultant Central Government funding cuts has had a significant impact on the VCS, reducing their capacity to deliver, as funding sources are depleted and demand for services by those residents negatively affected has increased. The changing financial climate has increased the drive for efficiencies, the Council responding through the Sunderland Way of Working, including the consideration of new delivery mechanisms. The service has and will increasingly need to support the VCS to similarly respond to these challenges and become more efficient and financially sustainable, through for example promoting greater collaboration within the Sector, and giving more emphasis on development of entrepreneurial models and activity e.g. Social Enterprises. The Service has already had to make cleaning efficiencies in its SLAs with Community Associations and has been providing support and advice to the CAs on alternative cleaning delivery. Ultimately, a more resilient Sector will be well positioned to take on the delivery of public services.
- 10.6 The need to address Climate Change and the City's Low Carbon agenda will need to be taken on board by the Service, with increasing support provided to VCSOs to become more environmentally sustainable in their policies, management of community assets and through their community projects. There is potential for the Service to build on existing projects with Responsive Local Services, the Council's SSS Economy and Sustainability Officers and

the Council's track record with developing Eco-Schools, to develop a package of support.

- 10.7 The Government's Welfare Reforms will have a significant impact on Sunderland's communities, and VCSOs are likely to face a considerable increase in demand, particularly those who provide Information, Advice and Guidance and deliver services to vulnerable groups and individuals. The service will need to ensure that the VCS is fully aware of the changes and the impact they will have, and that VCSOs are working in partnership with the Council and its partners to ameliorate the negative effects on the City's vulnerable residents. As such the service is represented in a Council cross-directorate working group to consider and take action on these changes.
- 10.8 Introduction of GP Commissioning arrangements are also likely to have an impact on Service delivery, where GPs will need to increase their engagement with VCSOs who deliver commissioned services. Greater formal links may need to be established between the Area VCS Networks and GP consortia to enable this, and discussions with NHS SOTW PCT are at an early stage. For example, a pilot workshop has recently been carried out with the Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group and the East VCS Network to discuss potential arrangements.
- 10.9 The personalisation agenda is gathering momentum with personal health budgets to be rolled out nationally from October 2012. The local market will need to be developed so that budget holders have greater choice and this will have an impact upon VCSOs, who will need to be supported to respond.
- 10.10 The Thriving VCS Survey (2011), alongside a piece of qualitative research commissioned by the Sunderland Partnership, highlighted several areas for Council and partner action against identified VCS need, which will have an impact on how the service is delivered in the future.
- 10.11 The service is currently undertaking a review of Area VCS Networks, and alongside the Council's review of Area Arrangements, this is likely to have an impact on how the Area VCS Networks operate in future.
- 10.12 In summary, over the coming year, Community Development will continue to help people to help themselves in building sustainable and resilient communities, leaving a legacy of volunteering and civil participation for years to come.

## **11.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 11.1 Scrutiny Committee Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

## **12.0 LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Sunderland's Voluntary and Community Sector  
Appendix 2 – Community Development Function Specification

Appendix 3 – Sport, Leisure and Community Development structure  
Appendix 4 – Area VCS Network structure  
Appendix 5 – Sunderland Area VCS Networks Terms of Reference  
Appendix 6 - Overall Community Development Performance

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## **Appendix 1 – Sunderland’s Voluntary and Community Sector**

In March 2011 there were 378 main charities in Sunderland with a total income of £101.6 million, a total of 8,131 volunteers, and those with an income over £500,000 with a total of 2,286 employees. (March 2011, Charity Commission data from each charity’s latest annual return).

These figures do not even account for the numerous smaller VCS organisations across the City which are not registered charities. For example, Guidestar data used for the National Survey of Charities and Social Enterprises (2010) indicates there are 460 charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises in the area, while 525 VCOS are listed on Sunderland’s Interactive Database (SID) held by VCAS.

## **Appendix 2 – Community Development Function Specification**

### **FUNCTION: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **SERVICE: COMMUNITY SERVICES**

### **DIRECTORATE: CITY SERVICES**

#### **Purpose of the Function**

The primary aim of the Community Development service is to help to build resilient and sustainable communities by helping people to help themselves and supporting VCSOs and civil participation through volunteering.

To achieve this aim, the service:

- Provides capacity building support to VCSOs to enable entrepreneurial activity, management of community assets and design and delivery of public services:
  - Provides governance, training and advice to VCSOs including intensive support to Community Associations via Service Level Agreements
  - Co-ordinates provision of support needs to the VCS (as identified in Thriving VCS Survey report)
  - Supports VCSOs and Council employees to develop commercial models e.g. co-operatives, mutuals and social enterprises
  - In collaboration with Land and Property, Office of the Chief Executive, leads implementation of the Council's Surplus Building Policy (Community Benefit)
  - Supports VCSOs to engage in commissioning
  - Supports VCSOs to take on public services
- Contributes to increasing volunteering and active citizenship:
  - Leads the implementation of the Sunderland Volunteering Strategy
  - Supports development of a Sunderland City 'bank' of volunteers to support city-wide events and initiatives and add value to service delivery
  - Supports development of a Council Employer Supported Volunteering programme for SWITCH and other employees
- Supports VCSOs to access funding and become efficient and sustainable in their use of resources (Low Carbon Economy):
  - Provides financial assistance to the VCS in Sunderland via Service Level Agreements and Play Grant Awards
  - Encourages VCSOs to develop consortia and collaborative working arrangements
  - Supports co-location of VCSOs and partners

- Supports VCSOs to engage in efficiency agenda e.g. SWOW
- Works with the Council's Sustainability Team, Groundwork and partners to support VCSOs to engage with the sustainability agenda and reduce their carbon footprint
- Co-ordinates targeted interventions to promote 'sense of place' and improve 'liveability' and wellbeing across the city and in local areas:
  - Supports the community to plan and design events, develop community projects and deliver Responsive Local Services e.g. Coalfield in Bloom
  - In collaboration with Sport & Leisure and Culture & Tourism, City Services, leads engagement of the VCS in delivery of the Sunderland 2012 Olympics / Paralympics Games programme
- Empowers communities to contribute to local decision making:
  - Develops and supports Area VCS Networks to support the Area Committee process and implementation of Local Area Plans
  - Supports VCSOs to engage with local partnerships and supports engagement mechanisms between the Council, Area VCS Networks, SCN delegates, the Sunderland Partnership and Local Economic Partnerships (under development)
- Seeks to improve partnership working with VCSOs:
  - Develops Council understanding of the VCS and added value VCSOs can bring to service delivery, through development of training to Council employees and provision of information to the Sunderland Leadership Programme
  - Implements the Sunderland Compact and its supporting Codes of Practice
  - Contributes to the enhancement of Community Leadership through strengthening Elected Member relationship with VCSOs
  - Contributes to the development and implementation of the Council's Corporate Social Responsibilities, including increasing recognition of Council support to the VCS and communities

### **Tools, Resources and Activities:**

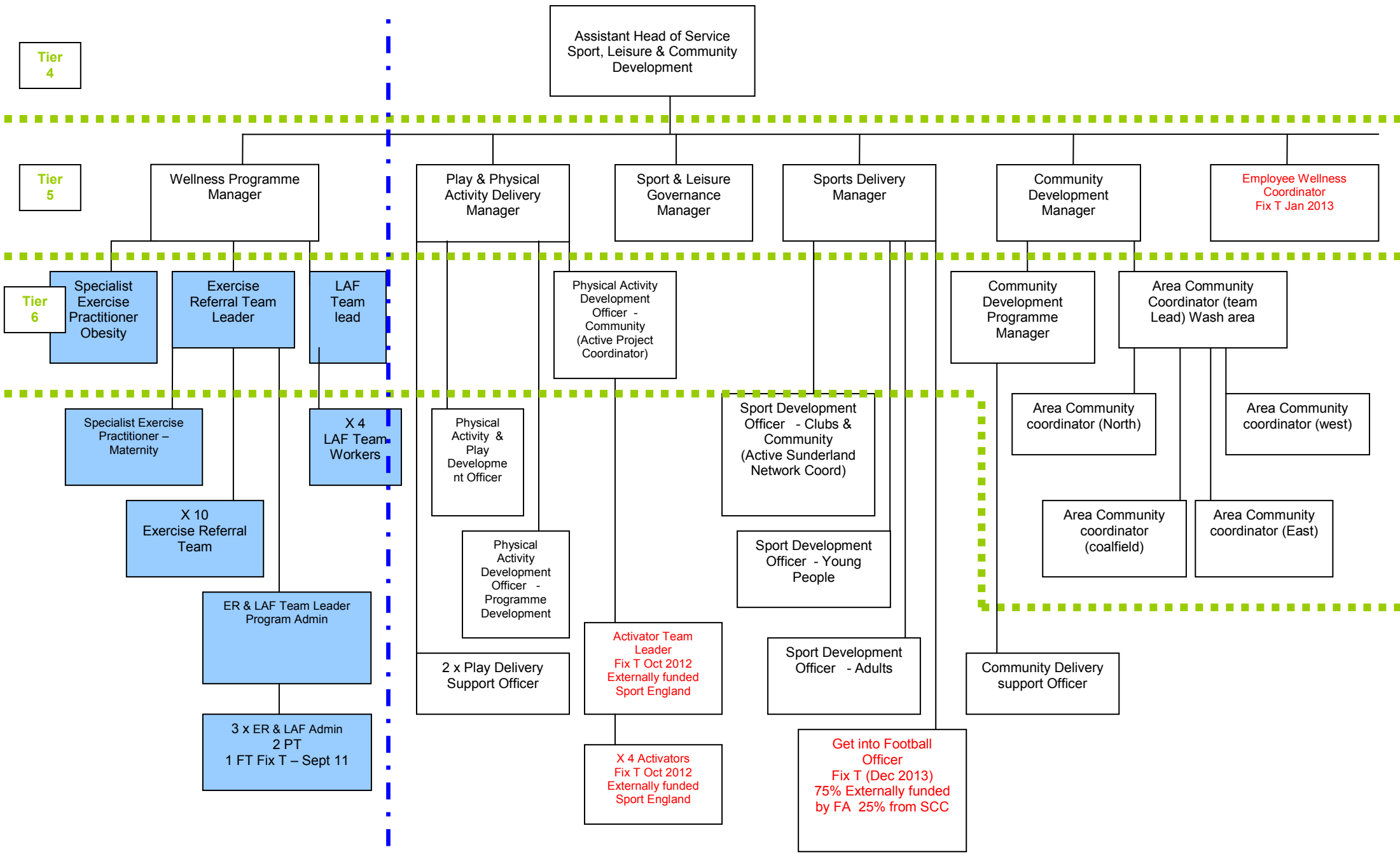
- Area VCS Networks
- Sunderland Community Network
- Sunderland Compact and supporting Codes of Practice
- Sunderland Volunteering Strategy
- Surplus Building Policy (Community Benefit)
- Thriving VCS Survey Report
- Volunteering Toolkit
- Community Help Booklet
- Area based Volunteering Celebration Events and links to citywide Annual Volunteer Week event at Sunderland Marriott Hotel
- Links to Area Newsletters
- Annual VCS AGM / Report [under development]



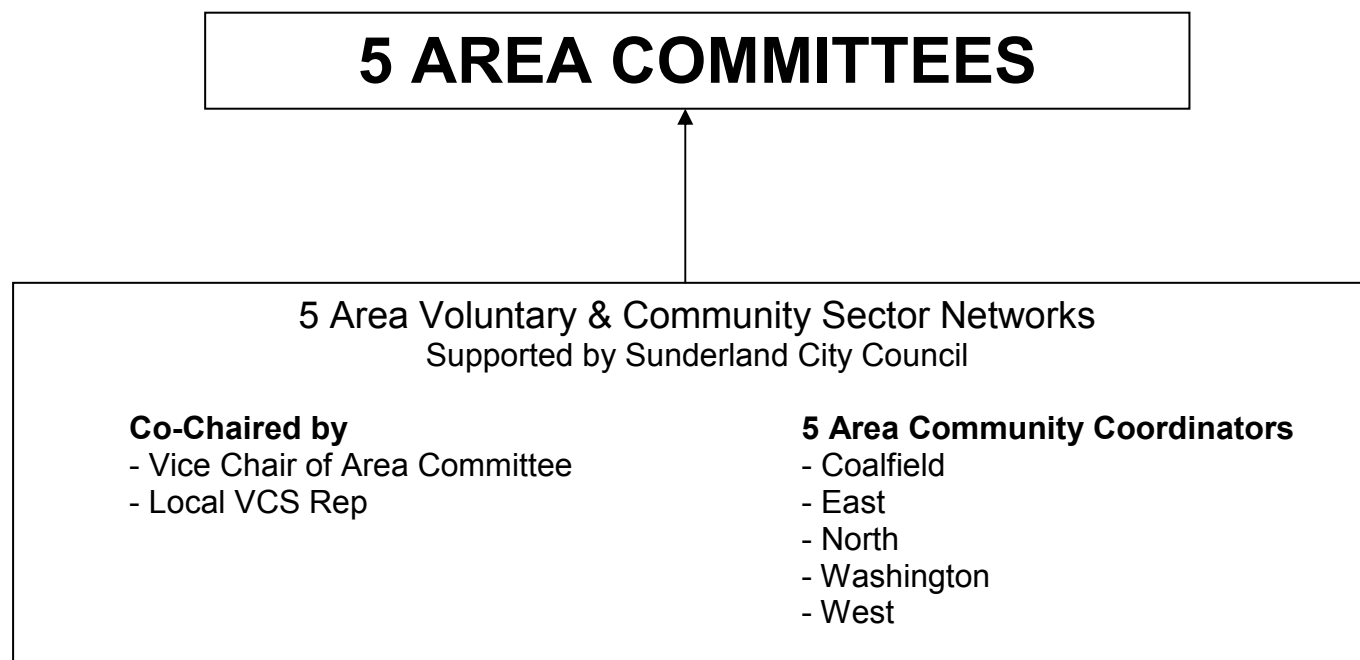
- Council E-learning
- Sunderland 2012 Olympic / Paralympic Games Programme (under development)
- Website links to Sunderland Compact, VCAS, SCN and Sunderland Partnership sites

Updated: December 2011

# Appendix 3 - Sport, Leisure & Community Development structure



## Appendix 4 - Area VCS Network Structure



### **Area VCS Networks:**

- Made up of local VCS organisations operating within the 5 geographical areas of Sunderland
- Hold regular meetings supported by Sunderland City Council
- Mapping local activity – leading on VCS issues regarding Local Area Plans
- Task & Finish Groups
- Encourage Volunteering in local initiatives

## **Appendix 5**

### **Sunderland Area VCS Networks**

#### **Terms of Reference**

##### **Aims:**

The Area Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Networks aims are:

- To develop the capacity and influence of the VCS across the City through the development of the Sunderland Community Network (SCN) at an area dimension.
- To work together to develop and share good local VCS practice.
- To provide three delegates to represent the area VCS at Area Committees, influencing strategic policies and practice that affects local communities and the VCS. The three delegates will represent the whole VCS in their area at the Area Committee rather than their own organisational interests.

##### **Objectives**

- To maximise the opportunity to have a constructive dialogue and ways of working between the Council and wider VCS organisations activity.
- To support the development and delivery of Local Area Plans in meeting communities needs, and building the community's capacity to engage in the development and delivery of services.
- To demonstrate the value of the VCS and the positive impact made by the sector.
- To determine annually three delegates to represent the Area VCS Network at Area Committee who will take forward issues on behalf of the whole VCS in the area and report back, providing a two-way flow of communication between SCN and the Area Committee.
- To agree a VCS co chair, annually, for the Area VCS Networks (the co chair being one of the three delegates to attend Area Committee)

##### **Membership**

Membership is open to all VCS organisations which operate in Sunderland, however, members who become delegates to Area Committee must be members of Sunderland Community Network (SCN) and be signed up to and operate within the principles of the Sunderland Compact.

All organisations attending the Area VCS Networks should operate within the Sunderland Compact, ensuring positive and productive relationships for mutual advantage and community gain.

Organisations must have an operational base within the area to represent the Area VCS Network at the Area Committee, however, any organisation that operates across Sunderland is welcome to attend any Area VCS Network.

## Meetings

- Meetings to be held two weeks in advance of Area Committee agenda setting. (Timing of meetings in relation to Area Committee meetings to be piloted).
- The secretariat will be provided by Sunderland City Council, Community Development function. This support will include, for example, secretariat support for meetings; support to understand specific agenda items through briefing notes, 1-2-1 meetings, presentation, facilitation of pre-meetings, website updates and training.
- Sunderland City Council will support by the network operating under a co chairing arrangement involving the Area Committee Vice Chair and a Network delegate.
- Partner organisations can be invited to present items / share information on a specific topic.

## VCS Area Committee Representation

### Key Tasks:

- 1.0 Attend committee meetings approximately seven meetings per annum and additional meetings, site visits and training sessions from time to time.
- 2.0 Reading papers and reports in preparation for committee meetings
- 3.0 Ensuring feedback and communication between Area Committee and Area VCS Networks is consistent.
- 4.0 Respecting the views of other members and taking forward to Area Committee the opinions of other members or contributors where this will lead to an improvement for the Area and City, and supporting other members in the process of change.
- 5.0 Being prepared to learn from others and from good practice elsewhere and to further develop the breadth of your knowledge of your sector's role within the Area and City.
- 6.0 Engaging in an induction programme to the Area Committee.
- 7.0 One of the three representatives to attend bi-monthly SCN Core Network Group delegate meetings for the purpose of sharing information, knowledge and experience, problem solving and devising strategies.

### Key attributes:

1. Interest in local matters.
2. All should be signed up to and operate within the principles of the Sunderland Compact.
3. Representatives should seek to represent the Area VCS Network (rather than own organisational interests), therefore representatives should have a broad perspective across the Area / VCS.
4. Demonstrate commitment to the VCS.
5. Effective communication skills, particularly listening and questioning skills.
6. Ability to weigh up information.

## Appendix 6 – Overall Community Development Performance

The National Survey of Charities and Social Enterprises (formerly the National Survey of Third Sector Organisations) is carried out by IPSOS MORI and funded by the Office for Civil Society. It is the largest survey of the Sector, including Charities, Social Enterprises, Community Groups, Clubs and Societies, Non-profit Organisations, Voluntary Organisations, Housing Associations, Trusts, Co-operatives and Mutuals and Faith Groups.

Evidence of how the service has improved the capacity of the Voluntary and Community Sector can be demonstrated through the 2010 Survey. A total of 233 organisations were surveyed in Sunderland. Survey results were as following:

Indicator	Year	Sunderland	National
% of organisations who consider that local statutory bodies have a positive influence on their success (N17)	2008	14%	16%
	<b>2010</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>18%</b>
% of organisations who currently have a 'fair' or 'great' amount of direct dealing with local statutory bodies	2008	31%	26%
	<b>2010</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>26%</b>
% of organisations satisfied with their ability to influence local decisions that are relevant to them	2008	16%	15%
	<b>2010</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>16%</b>
% of organisations satisfied with the support available to them in their local area	2008	25%	22%
	<b>2010</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>24%</b>
% of organisations who agree that local statutory bodies value the work of their organisation	2008	36%	37%
	<b>2010</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>39%</b>
% of organisations who are satisfied with local statutory grant funding/contract bidding arrangements	2008	18%	13%
	<b>2010</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>14%</b>

### Other key findings for Sunderland

- 35% of organisations are involved in the delivery of public services, compared to 20% in 2008.
- 23% of organisations consider delivery of public services to be one of their main roles, compared to 13% in 2008.
- 86% of organisations think they have been successful in meeting their main objectives over the last 12 months, compared to 82% in 2008.
- 77% of organisations are confident that they will be successful in meeting their main objectives over the next 12 months (no change from 2008 figure).

- 24% of organisations currently receive grant funding from the Council; 18% currently receive income in the form of a contract.
- 26% of organisations are satisfied with the help, advice and support provided by local statutory bodies when applying for grants/ bidding for contracts, compared to 19% in 2008.
- The proportion of organisations who consider that local statutory bodies have a negative influence on their success has decreased from 18% in 2008 to 12% in 2010.