

22nd June 2023

REPORT OF NORTH AREA VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR NETWORK

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The report provides an update with regard to the North 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 North Area Network delegates will present a report to each Area Committee meeting informing Members of activity, progress, issues and concerns of the sector.

2.3 The North VCS Network is made up of over 100 local groups and strategic local/national/regional partners. The network meets on a regular basis in order to share good practice, support one another and receives regularly updates as part of an information share e bulletin.

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

3.1 The North VCS Network met in June 2023 at Castletown Methodist Church

3.2 The meeting included the following agenda items:

- Health Screening Programmes
- Networking and Information Share Opportunities

3.3 At recent meetings the voluntary sector organisations present have raised the issues their local communities are facing with the cost of living crisis and especially those delivering welcoming spaces are seeing a rise in people attending and needing intensive support.

3.4 Regular funding bulletins are provided to the Network to ensure VCS organisations are kept informed of funding opportunities available.

3.5 The Network representatives regularly consult with the Network to ensure that the agenda items reflect their requirements.

3.6 The Area Arrangements team are working in collaboration with the Sunderland VCS Alliance and wider Council services and partners to bring forward social value from investments and from businesses delivering in the city, to support the voluntary and community sector. The Area Arrangements team and the VCS Alliance are also working together to understand where local community services are currently being delivered within the area, to support resident community resilience and wellbeing.

3.7 Moving forward from the warm spaces , we are continuing to work closely with the sector to extend and co-produce the 'welcoming warm spaces', which in the future will be potential

hubs for community activities – delivering support activities as part of the wider social prescribing offer – Links for Life. A detailed update will be shared in relation to ‘Links for Life’ and the need to continue to grow the capacity within the VCS, in a future area network report.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Members are requested

- To note the contents of the report and consider the opportunities and issues raised by the North VCSN.

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