

15 October 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 three times since the last Area Committee in June 2014.

3.1 July 2014

Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference of this group were circulated and discussed. There is a requirement for VCS representatives to be selected on a rolling programme with one rep stepping down from their position each year. The longest service representative Ann Owen will be the first rep required to stand down in order for new nominations to be made (existing rep is eligible to be nominated and be reselected). The group agreed that the first selection process will take place in March next year in line with the new financial year, and then each March thereafter.

Maximising Greenspace ideas

£20k Public Health funding has been made available for improving use of greenspace in the area for the benefit of local people's wellbeing. A discussion took place on how the resources would be best used and the group acknowledged that the area was fortunate to have such a wide selection of accessible open space and that what was already available should be promoted and co-ordinated focusing on the whole area and not one or two specific sites. Signs in parks and on footpaths would help to let people know what is available and point out interesting walks and routes which people could use. Activities aimed at young people were of particular interest to the group..

3.2 August 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 been delivered by the Network and members. HLF (Heritage Lottery Funding) and Area Committee SIB (Strategic Initiative Budget) funding

allowed 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 32 VCS groups and 5 schools have been engaged in the local project and have delivered 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 was 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. Groups involved in the project include:

- Easington Lane Community Access Point
- Elemore Banner Group
- St Andrews Church
- Bramble Hollow
- Penshaw CA
- New Penshaw Ladies Club
- Houghton Older People
- Elemore Ladies Club
- Easington Lane Senior Citizens Group
- St Aidans Church
- St Oswalds Church
- Friends of Rectory Park
- Friends of Houghton Hillside Cemetery
- Houghton Race Course Community Access Point
- Friends of Cherry Tree Gardens
- MS Society (Hetton Group)

Health Champions

It was identified that although a large number of people have completed the dementia awareness module of health champions, there has not been much take up of the core modules required to be a certificated Health Champion. Modules include healthy eating, smoking, and drug and alcohol misuse. The course also provides a lot of generic health information. The group were encouraged to sign up.

3.3 September 2014 Essence Service

An overview of the Essence Service was given to the group. Essence Service has been commissioned by the CCG to support people with a recent diagnosis of dementia and to support their carers across the City of Sunderland area. The office is based at Doxford Park and is hoping to achieve Centre of Excellence.

Essence Service work is led by Age UK Sunderland in partnership with Alzheimer's UK, Hetton New Dawn, Bangladeshi Centre and Carers Centre. The criteria for referrals is that the patient must have a clear dementia diagnosis. Once the referral is received a member of staff will make contact either at their home or any alternative venue, to discuss and agree a personal plan. The aim is to get to know the person and offer any support or advice on any topic such as Power of Attorney, Finances and social activities.

Essence Service is not there to duplicate services, they will signpost to the appropriate service in the first instance and if there is a gap will support that person for as long as possible.

Essence Service mainly would take referrals from Memory Protection Service at Monkwearmouth site but agreement is made that referrals will be taken from any dementia sufferer who has a diagnosis.

Information Sharing

A Coalfield Community Road Show Event on the 25th October 2014 from 10 – 2.00 p.m will be held in the Hetton Centre. There will be over 30 local groups and organisations promoting the range of services and activities available in the area. Residents of the area are invited to come along and find out what is happening in their area and what support they can receive on a number of issues such as IT support, debt advice, money management, healthy lifestyles and youth activities. There will be activities for children and families to take part in. Area Committee Councillors are invited to attend the event in order to speak to local residents, and to find out what the VCS Network members are delivering in the area.

Hetton New Dawn is working with Hetton Fellowship to deliver a weekly food bank held at the Central Point Church but due to the proposed sale of the building an alternative venue is required. New Dawn is in discussion with SNCBC who may be able to offer premises at the Flatts at Easington Lane during the day. There are people using the food bank regularly and are relying on it. People who are on benefit delays, benefit sanctions, emergency appeals and single mums and large families regularly request help. The Network discussed these issues and is concerned about the reliance on food banks. Partners agreed to co-ordinate the support they offer and share information with each other.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Members are requested

- To note the contents of the report
- To consider the continuation of the successful heritage project
- To promote and attend the 'Coalfield Community Roadshow'
- To consider the Network's concerns about the impact of welfare reform, especially with regard to reliance on food banks

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