

3 December 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 once since the last Area Committee in October 2014.

3.1 October 2014

Big Local

An overview of Big Local was given, explaining that this is a ten year, lottery funded, programme for Easington Lane and Moorsley. The programme must be resident led and identify a 'trusted organisation' to act as the lead for financial and administrative purposes. ELCAP acted as the lead organisation to get the programme to the point where it has developed a delivery plan and is ready to start. Gentoo has come forward to become the trusted organisation and further discussion with Big is taking place to agree how the plan will be taken forward.

Health and Greenspaces Project

An update on the Health and Greenspaces project was given. The group were asked to nominate one of the VCS representatives to join the group. It was agreed Susan Brown would represent the Network.

Celebrating Heritage

The group were given an update regarding the SIB funding allocated for heritage. An application form will be circulated across the Network offering small grants of up to £500 for history and heritage related projects. Various projects were suggested and individual groups will develop ideas further before completing the application.

Information Sharing

The Coalfield Community Road Show Event held on the 25th October 2014 was discussed. It was a good event for networking and joint working between local organisations but noted that the turnout of members of the public was not as high as expected. The venue, day held, and promotion methods were all identified as areas for consideration for any future events to ensure more residents are aware of what is available.

The group discussed Durham Community Foundation (DCF) grants and the difficulties some groups are experiencing accessing the EON funding. After some discussion it was agreed that a representative from DCF was invited to the December meeting.

Claire Tulley from Nexus gave a brief overview on the Quality Contract Scheme, which is a legal power over bus services by a council. In this case, the North East Combined Authority will set ticket prices, routes and timetables across Tyne and Wear and on some routes in and out of County Durham and Northumberland. NECA will also decide what types of buses are used. Nexus, the public body which devised this scheme and currently manages the Tyne and Wear Metro, will collect fares and pay bus companies to provide bus services through contracts. This is a big change to the present market, where buses companies decide on prices and routes.

Melanie Caldwell updated on the changes to Gentoo housing and neighbourhood management. Gentoo are recruiting 10 new housing managers who will be the single point of contact for all issues for Gentoo tenants within a particular neighbourhood. Each housing manager will speak with all tenants on their patch and work through a survey to identify what support they may require.

VCAS have arranged a 'funding fair' on 4 December. Ten funders are attending the event, at St Marys and St Peters in Springwell, to give information and advice to groups who are seeking funding. Further information available from Trish Cornish.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Members are requested

- To note the contents of the report

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