

13th March 2024

REPORT OF WEST AREA VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR NETWORK

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report provides an update with regard to the West 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 West 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 West VCS Network is made up of over 70 local groups and strategic local/national/regional partners. The network meets on a regular basis to share good practice, support one another and receives regularly updates.

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

- 3.1 The West VCS Network met in person at South Hylton Tansey Centre February 2024
- 3.2 The February meeting included the following agenda items:
- Culture House – a presentation was presented around the Culture House, this was very informative and showed the new development and also gave members of the network the opportunity to ask questions.
 - Enterprising Sunderland – Back on the Map presented around their new project working with people in Sunderland to set up businesses.
 - West Area Event – An update was given on the West Event from Youth Almighty Project and member organisations were invited to apply through the application process
 - Network and Information Share Opportunities

The meeting was very well attended and provided a really good networking opportunity and information share around activities and events happening in different organisations.

- 3.3 Organisations throughout the West Area are now delivering Links for Life Sunderland. The programme is learning from the warm and welcoming spaces. Links for Life offers services and support to communities - support and activities which bring residents together, enable active engagement and improve health, wellbeing, and financial resilience.
- 3.4 Organisations have been invited to deliver at the West Area Event 2024 which will be taking place on Thursday 27th June and Friday 28th June for the West Area Schools and Saturday 29th June for the Free Family Fun Day.
- 3.5 Organisations have been invited to apply for a call for project through Public Health to expand community based mental health and emotional wellbeing provision that is available for men in Sunderland.
- 3.6 Digital Health Hubs have been set up across the West Area through Sunderland City Council and are working closely with the Digital Inclusion Lead. Training opportunities have been provided. Investment has been made to improve the buildings digital infrastructure. West Area organisations have attended their first Digital Health Hub Catch Up.
- 3.7 Opportunities have been shared through Community Resilience team to the network including training, funding and workshops.
- 3.8 Organisations were invited to apply for the West Grow your own/in Bloom.
- 3.9 West VCS Reps have attended a catch up with all area reps from across the City.
- 3.10 Kelly Brougham has resigned from being a VCS Rep due to other commitments. We would like to Thank Kelly for her work and time as a rep. We will be looking for nominations for a new West Area Network Representative within the network.
- 3.11 The Network representatives regularly consult with the Network to ensure that the agenda items reflect their requirements.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are requested
 - To note the contents of the report and consider the opportunities and issues raised by the West VCSN.

5. Contact

Sophie Clinton, Area Network Representative
Tel No: 0191 523 8000

Jeanette Chapman, Area Network Representative
Tel No: 0191 534 3928