

**29 September 2020**

## **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 (VCS) 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 the Networks 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**

- 3.1 During the past 3 months the voluntary and community sector have continued to deliver a range of support and services to Coalfields residents. Easington Lane Community Access Point have continued to co-ordinate the community hub in the Coalfields providing ongoing assistance with shopping, arranging food bank referrals and befriending. The service has seen a reduction in the number of residents being supported however still proves invaluable to residents.
- Other examples of work taking place:
- SHARP have continued to deliver information, advice, and guidance for residents. They launched an electronic village hall from their Shiney Row premises from 2<sup>nd</sup> September where residents can book an appointment to use a computer. They continue to signpost residents to the food bank.
  - Hetton New Dawn, Loaves and Fishes project has continued to deliver food bank services throughout the past 3 months. From Friday 11th September "Friday Takeaway" was launched. Local residents can collect a meal for themselves or for the family, from Hetton & Eppleton Community Hall. Children's activity packs are available as well thanks to funding secured from @TNLCommunityFund, @dcmsgovuk, Community Regeneration Trust and The Company Shop.
  - SNCBC have launched the delivery of a five-month lottery funded Future In Mind Project. The project aims to re-engage with young people, through detached youth sessions in the Coalfields locality and find out how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected them, and to identify what support they may be require. The project has engaged with over 200 young people since the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020. The Good Vibes Project has also launched which is match funded through the Coalfields Area Committee, and this is to deliver youth provision but also allow targeted support for young people. We have a part time Counsellor attached to the project where we can refer young people in times of crisis, the young person will be seen at the Flatts Youth Centre.
- 3.2 Many voluntary and community sector organisations are trying to maintain its support to the Coalfields residents in these unprecedented times. Some are taking steps to progress to reopen its doors to re-establish services however due to local lockdown plans may be affected. Unfortunately, some projects e.g. St Aidans Community Group haven't been able

to 'ride the storm' and there could have been many additional VCS Group casualties as a direct result of the pandemic, if not for the financial support offered by Sunderland City Council and the Coalfields Area Committee.

- 3.3 Finally, with regards to the VCS network, we will be recommencing meetings using digital video platforms in October.

#### **4. Recommendations**

4.1 Members are requested

- To note the contents of the report
- To continue to support the Sector when developing and implementing actions against local priorities
- To use information gathered from Network meetings to inform current and future priorities and Area Committee Plan

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