

14 March 2018

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

The Coalfield VCSN has met three times since the last Area Committee in November 2017.

3.1 November 2017

- **Environmental Issues** - Nicky Rowland, Environmental Services Manager, Sunderland City Council gave a comprehensive presentation on the newly 'relaunched' service dealing with Environmental Enforcement. Real life cases of fly tipping, litter and household/commercial waste disposal were displayed and discussed. The presentation and information was very well received by the group. There are a number of environmental projects and initiatives across the area being delivered by local groups and residents. The My Space, Our Place project funded via SIB is delivering an educational programme to complement community clean ups and initiatives.
- **GDPR** - The group discussed safety of data and the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which will come into force in May 2018. It will change how businesses and organisations can handle the information of customers. Advice and support is available on the impending legislation. Elaine Harbron, Community IT, provided some information.
- **Priorities** - The group carried out an exercise around two priority areas: Working in partnership to address key issues that affect residents' emotional and mental wellbeing, and Encouraging and supporting residents to eat healthily and take part in wellbeing activity. A number of suggestions for project ideas were discussed including advice volunteers, debt buddies, young carers group, health champions, family learning, walking football, wellbeing walks, family cooking in school holidays and working with schools. The results were shared with the People Board to inform the development of a Call for Projects.

3.2 January 2018

- **Step Up Project** - Paul McKinnell, Voluntary and Community Support Officer for SIB Funded project Step Up, gave an overview of the project and its purpose. The project is designed to support local community and voluntary sector organisations across the Coalfield in a variety of ways including reviewing and updating governance arrangements/

policies and procedures, recruiting and retaining volunteers, providing training for staff and volunteers, and offering advice and support on income generation and fundraising.

- **Coalfield Area Committee Funding Opportunities** - Councillor Anne Lawson outlined the funding currently available from Coalfield Area Committee SIB, as follows:
Comm Chest - Ward based grants for community groups
Tall Ships - Grants of up to £300 available for groups and schools to take part in heritage or cultural activities
Social Inclusion - Grants of up to £3,000 available to increase social interaction, and reduce isolation of carers, older people and vulnerable adults to improve their wellbeing.
Activities for Children and Young People - Grants of up to £4,000 available to provide activities.
CAN DO fund - Grants of up to £500 available to groups of young people to increase participation improve health or improve skills. Deadline 16 April 2018.(People Board 26 April 2018)

3.3 **February 2018**

- **Sunderland Foodbank Network** - Kate Townsend, Sunderland Foodbank Co-ordinator has been in post 3 months and is employed by Durham Christian Partnership delivering the Sunderland Foodbank on behalf of the Sunderland Connect Network. There are 14 identified foodbanks across the City of Sunderland and Kate's role will help with cohesion and communication across all areas. The project is in early days and still working out who does what and what the relationships are in the area. The group discussed personal hygiene items, toilet rolls and sanitary items. It is not only food which is required. Kate will provide information on local Coalfield area foodbanks and how groups can become a referral organisation. Kate can be contacted on coordinator@sunderlandfoodbank.org.uk
- **Cultural Spring** - Emma Scarr, Cultural Spring, informed the group of a number of opportunities available. **Your Arts** can provide groups (3 or more people) with grants of £400 - £1000 to allow people to do something they would not be able to do. **Set the Sails** project is a 8-10 week course available to groups of young people. It is a model making session to make a ship, with participants taking part in the Tall Ships Parade in July 2018. There is an **Access Fund** to support transport etc.. to make arts more accessible and a **Go and See** project which provides trips away to museums etc... for a small charge. All information is available on the website <http://theculturalspring.org.uk/> or by contacting Emma emma.scarr@theculturalspring.org.uk

VCS Network meetings continue to be well attended and are seen as the recognised route for local organisations to receive and share information with Sunderland City Council, statutory and voluntary sector partners and each other. On average 30 – 35 people attend the meetings and over 100 are on the mailing list. All local organisations are encouraged to engage with the Network and take part in activities and meetings.

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

Contact: Wendy Cook, Area Network Representative
Debbie Ainscow, Area Network Representative
Paul Finch, Area Network Representative