COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE **Item 4a**

10 June 2015

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 March 2015.

3.1 <u>March 2015</u>

An update was given on the **Health and Greenspace Project**: There are a number of individual projects as part of the overall programme, being delivered within the allocated budget. Laura Bartlett has put forward an idea to link four Coalfields parks which will be a 25k circular route.

A total of £40,000 (£20,000 from CCG and £20,000 SIB) has been awarded to develop projects to tackle **Social Isolation**. The April People Board will develop a project brief and there will be an opportunity for VCS organisations to apply for funding.

There were two nominations for **VCS Representatives** to Area Committee**.** Both candidates gave a brief speech about what they could contribute as a representative for VCS at the Area Committee. Whole group agreed that both Wendy Cook, SNCBC and Dave McCreedy, Fencehouses YMCA were suitable to fill the positions available.

The Community Engagement Co-ordinator from **Healthwatch** Sunderland gave a brief overview of the purpose and role of Healthwatch and asked the group to become involved on providing feedback regarding health provision.

The **Gentoo Community Leaf Car** is available for local groups and organisations to use within the Coalfield area to support their activities. Hetton New Dawn currently uses the vehicle to provide transport to those who find it difficult to access lunch and social clubs. If any groups want to use the vehicle they should contact Gentoo for more information.

The group discussed the two large **community events** delivered last year, the first by Gentoo at Rainton Meadows, and the second by the VCS Network and Sunderland City Council at the Hetton Centre. The group agreed that this year there should be a joint approach and one large event.

It was highlighted that a great amount of work has been delivered via the VCS Network and partner members in support of the Area priorities. The Network welcomed an opportunity to highlight some examples within the **Annual Report**.

Priorities for the coming year were discussed briefly and a number of issues were raised, including Community IT provision and support in locally accessible venues. The Network members agreed they would like to feed in to the refresh of Area Committee plans.

3.2 April 2015

An update was given on the **Community event** at Rainton Meadows Arena, organised and funded in partnership by Gentoo and Sunderland City Council. There were 35 local organisations providing information on what services and activities are available locally. Over 750 people attended and feedback was very positive. Consultation was carried out with local residents to find out what people liked and disliked about where they live. There was lots of positive feedback, with majority of people satisfied with their local area. Issues raised included a lack of activities for younger people, and issues with dog dirt. There was a lot of good feedback about the parks.

Susan Brown is no longer with ELCAP and therefore, has had to resign as **VCS Representative to Area Committee**. Nominations are sought for a new representative.

The group discussed **Area Priorities** and gave suggestions about issues which are important. Two of the VCS representatives attended the Coalfield priority setting workshop and fed in views of this group. It was felt that social isolation and mental health in young people were important, and physical wellness and green space are high on the agenda. Skills development for young people was highlighted as a priority area.

3.3 **May 2015**

The new Chair of Area Committee, and this group, Cllr Anne Lawson, updated the meeting on the **changes to Area Committee**, as a result of the recent local elections.

There was one nomination for **VCS Representative** to Area Committee**.** The candidate gave a brief speech about what they could contribute as a representative for VCS at the Area Committee. The whole group agreed that Paul Finch of Hetton New Dawn was suitable to fill the position available.

As part of the **Health and Greenspace** project, a series of outdoor events will take place during the period 21 – 24 July 2015. The events will use a local green space in each of the four wards to deliver fun, healthy activities and provide information about healthy lifestyles.

The group discussed the possibility of developing a **work plan** for the coming year, to reflect the Coalfield Area Committee priorities, once they are agreed in June 2015.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Members are requested

- To note the contents of the report
- To consider Network representation when developing projects and priorities during the coming year
- Attend the Health and Greenspace outdoor event in their respective ward

Contact: Wendy Cook, Area Network Representative
Dave McCreedy, Area Network Representative
Paul Finch, Area Network Representative