

## **WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE**

**16<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

### **REPORT OF WASHINGTON AREA COMMUNITY VOLUNTARY SECTOR NETWORK**

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The report provides an update with regard to the Washington Area Community and Voluntary 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 and reporting back, providing a two-way flow of communication.
- 2.2 Washington Area Network delegates will present a report to each Area Committee meeting informing Members of activity, progress, issues and concerns of the sector.

#### **3. Washington Network**

- 3.1 In Washington, the VCS is made up of a wide range of organisations ranging from independent local branches of national charities through to small, totally voluntary, community groups. Collectively these organisations provide Washington residents with a wide range of local services, activities and opportunities and have a significant role within community life here.
- 3.2 The Network delivers its own work plan. The Network will report progress and issues regularly via Area Committee. Detailed reports of all activity are presented to the Neighbourhood and Community Board for Member's comments.
- 3.3 As well as partner updates re what is happening across the area, events, opportunities etc. partners regularly attended the Network meetings to present information.
- 3.4 The Area Network partners have also contributed to and supported the SCC Let's Talk Resident Engagement Strategy, assisting with resident engagement, completing questionnaires and being involved in the Area Conversation Events to contribute to the Area Committee's emerging Neighbourhood Investment Plan

#### **4. Washington Network (AVCSN) Progress Report**

- 4.1 The Washington VCS Network has not met since the last Area Committee due to Covid19. The network has kept in regular contact sharing information and ideas.
- 4.2 The Area Network became galvanised within days after the lock down was declared and transformed their services to ensure they continued to support those in need from across the area. Whilst many centres had to close, services continued to be delivered but in a different way.
- 4.3 SNCBC have worked with the Council, CCG, Gentoo and volunteers to provide support for shopping, prescriptions befriending, dog walking and many more services. Together hundreds of residents across Washington have been supported

and many new and lasting friendships have been made. This pandemic has strengthened the network and has shown what strong communities we have.

4.4 As COVID19 restrictions are gradually being revised by Government, organisations from across the network are coming together to share ideas to look at how they can re-open safely from July. Organisations expect activity programmes will look very different to previous years as they need to work within government guidelines, ensuring measures are in place to keep everyone safe by respecting social distancing and implementing rigorous hygiene procedures.

4.5 With reference to the Network's Terms of Reference, it is intended to request the Washington Area Network to appoint a 3<sup>rd</sup> Area Committee Area Network Representative. The recruitment process for that position will commence once restrictions are lifted and the Network starts to meet again

## **5. Recommendations**

5.1 Members are requested

- To note the contents of the report and consider the opportunities and issues raised by the Washington ACVSN

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