

15 MARCH 2022

**REPORT OF WEST AREA VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR NETWORK****1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The report provides an update with regards 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 are in place 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, as well as strategic local/national/regional partners. The network meets in the West on a regular basis to share good practice and support one another. The network feeds into a virtual network and feed into and receives weekly updates as part of an information share.

**3. West Area Voluntary and Community Sector Network (AVCSN) Progress Report**

- 3.1 The West VCS Network met in person in December 2021 and again in March 2022. At the December meeting the network welcomed presentations on the Crowd Fund Sunderland and the VCS reps. Groups also shared details on activities being delivered in centres across the West.
- 3.2 Reps have received the results from their recent survey which has shown that people want to meet in person and have a venue with parking and a large space, so the network will move around the area. The days that were chosen were Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday so the reps have set the days to be varied. Organisations have asked for the dates to be set in advance and have asked for topics that were informative. All future meetings will cover the topics organisations have requested.
- 3.3 At the March VCS Network meeting members welcomed an update from the Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance. The update included a summary of actions since their event at Bede Tower, the progress on creating an independent organisation, and Training opportunities. Sarah Lattaway the Sunderland VCS Alliance Community Support (West) worker gave an update on the work she has been doing to support West area organisations. The workshop focused on the future governance of the VCS Alliance. Future discussions will take place but members in attendance offered their views and support.
- 3.4 Local VCS organisations have been invited to apply to Deliver targeted activities across Sunderland during 2022, within neighbourhoods, to support older residents at risk of Falling, to improve their Strength and Balance and reduce their social isolation
- 3.5 Local VCS organisations have been invited to apply to deliver targeted activities across the west to support older residents in reducing social isolation and loneliness.
- 3.6 Organisations from the West are continuing to work collaboratively to provide support to vulnerable households in most need with Food, Fuel and Other Essential Needs.
- 3.7 Our Network representative Joanne Laverick continues to attend various Strategic and operational meetings with the Sunderland VCS Alliance.

**4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 Members are requested to note the content of this report.

Contact: Bill Leach, Area Network Representative

Tel No: 0191 5348435

Joanne Laverick, Area Network Representative  
Kelly Brougham, Area Network Representative

Tel No: 0191 5238000  
Tel No: 07946269005