

## REPORT OF WASHINGTON AREA COMMUNITY VOLUNTARY SECTOR NETWORK

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report provides an update with regards to the Washington Area Community & 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 sector 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 informing Members of recent activity, progress, issues and concerns of the sector
- 2.3 The delegates will also represent the Network at the VCS Alliance meetings.

### 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 VCS groups and organisations. Collectively these organisations provide Washington residents with a wide range of local services, activities and opportunities and have a significant role within community life.
- 3.2 As well as partner updates re what is happening across the area, events, opportunities etc., partners regularly attend the networks to present information, consult and to offer numerous opportunities to develop partner approaches.
- 3.3 The Area Network partners 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 Neighbourhood Investment Plans
- 3.4 The Area Network also provides a direct link between the Sunderland VC Alliance and the VCS Sector and continues to engage the sector in the

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

- 4.1 The Washington Network has continued to meet with 'in person' meetings held every 6 – 8 weeks at the Washington Millennium Centre
- 4.2 The Sunderland VCS Alliance Community Support Worker continues to support organisations across the area and is currently supporting with funding applications, sustaining buildings, and providing governance advice: The VCS Alliance is now distributing the Sectors E bulletin, providing a range of training opportunities identified as needed by the sector, and organising workshops in all areas.
- 4.3 Washington Network has met twice since the last Committee meeting. At the meeting in July the Network received a presentation from the VCS Alliance:
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> VCS Area Representative elected – Jemma Hutchinson Washington Mind
  - Weedkilling pilot
  - Sunderland VCS Alliance support for the Sector, training opportunities and the future 'business model' for an independent Alliance
  - Area Committee updates
  - Partner updates and information sharing
  - Taking Stock Survey promoted

Meeting held August 2022 received the following:

- New online process for applying for Community Chest
- Volunteer training from the Sunderland VC Alliance 21<sup>st</sup> September at the WMC
- Next meeting brought forward to 27<sup>th</sup> Sept (from October) to discuss Social Value programme
- Taking Stock Survey promoted
- Update from Area Committee/Neighbourhood Board
- Partner updates and information sharing – introduction of 2 x Peer Support Community Connectors (Washington Mind)

## **5. Recommendations**

5.1 Members are requested to note the contents of the report and consider the opportunities and issues raised by the Washington AVCS.

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