

14 November 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 June 2018.

3.1 June 2018

This meeting was dedicated to judging the artwork entered for the SIB funded Tall Ships Challenge. Five schools took part and each created a piece of artwork to celebrate the Tall Ships Races in Sunderland. Each school used a different art medium including mosaic, glass and ceramic. Each member of the VCS Network made a 'secret' vote, with Hetton Primary School declared the winner. Each school received a certificate for taking part.

3.2 September 2018

Colleagues from Houghton Job Centre attended the meeting to give an overview of their services. Subjects covered included universal credit, impact on families and health and wellbeing. Staff are working to change the experience visitors to the Job Centre have by making it a more welcoming place and getting out and about in the community to engage with local groups and organisations and promote the services they provide. The range of partners who provide support within Job Centres is expanding and includes Wear Recovery College, North East Autism Society, GP practices, Mental Health Matters, Springboard and the Neighbourhood Police Team. Members of the VCS Network were encouraged to contact Job Centre representatives to further develop partnership working.

Two Police Community Support Officers attended the meeting to introduce themselves and give an overview of their role. They are keen to work alongside other organisations and groups so they can signpost residents to the correct type of support required.

3.3 October 2018

The group were introduced to Place and People Board Chairs who were in attendance to gain a further understanding of how the VCS Network operates and how local organisations can support area priorities.

A Public Health specialist gave a presentation on the results of the ***Loneliness and Isolation in Sunderland*** research carried out. The presentation provided some interesting facts and information - Lonely older people are 1.8 times more likely to visit their GP, 1.6 times more likely to visit A&E and 3.5 times more likely to enter local authority-funded residential care (Social Finance 2018). The impact of loneliness on health was highlighted e.g. Can be as harmful to your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, increases the risk of

high blood pressure, there is a higher risk of the onset of a disability, 64% chance of developing clinical dementia, more prone to depression.

The group discussed the issue in detail, and shared information and concerns about support available in the community. One of the issues raised was the need for a more co-ordinated approach between GPs/medical services and support available in the community. The Coalfield Area MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team) co-ordinator from the GP Alliance was in attendance at the meeting and will continue to attend to provide a link back to GPs and other health professionals. The value of social prescribing was discussed.

Colleagues from Sunderland Carers Centre gave an overview of services provided and highlighted the value of working with local groups providing services and activities to carers.

- 5,632 Carers in the Coalfield area (Actual number likely to be much higher)
- 1,281 carers engaged with the Carers Centre
- 957 Adult Carers
- 187 Parents Carers
- 135 Young Carers.

Sunderland carers centre employ a Carer Locality Lead who is based in the community integrated team in Houghton Primary Care Centre 2 days a week. Their primary role is to support carers within the Coalfields area and as such, provide 1:1 and group support to carers throughout their locality.

The Carer Locality Lead will also provide support, information and guidance to key partners throughout the area including G.P surgeries, voluntary and community organisations. In the coalfields locality area awareness training, information stands and drop in's are provided in order to further identify and support carers and their families. The group were asked to provide information on what they are currently providing, and where they see the issues/gaps in provision.

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. Area Priorities are discussed and information provided is used to inform area priorities via the Place and People Boards. 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
- To use information gathered from Network meetings to inform current and future priorities

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