

14th December 2023

REPORT OF NORTH AREA VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR NETWORK

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report provides an update with regard to the North 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 North 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 North VCS Network is made up of over 100 local groups and strategic local/national/regional partners. The network meets on a regular basis to share good practice, support one another and receives regularly updates as part of an information share e bulletin distributed via the Sunderland VS Alliance.

3. North Voluntary and Community Sector Network (VCSN) Progress Report

- 3.1 The North VCS Network met in June 2023 at Castletown Methodist Church, September 2023 at Redhouse Community Centre and October 2023 at Marley Park Community Fire Station
- 3.2 The meetings have included the following agenda items:
- Health Screening Programmes
 - Networking and Information Share Opportunities
 - Change the Game
 - Wear Moving
 - Makem Money – Small Grants Programme
 - Sunderland Software City Skills Programme
- 3.3 Members of the network who signed the Pledge for Links for Life were invited to apply for the new call for projects in September. The programme is building on the learning from the warm and welcoming spaces by:
- ensuring we are able to offer services and support within our communities
 - ensuring we have support and activities available which bring residents together
 - enabling active engagement and improve health, wellbeing and financial resilience.

Successful projects will deliver Links for Life from January 2024

- 3.4 Member of the Network received information on the free membership scheme with Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance(SVSA) and were also invited to attend 'Let's Communicate' online event with SVSA in November 2023.

- 3.5 The Network received an update on progress made on the staff recruitment for SVSA, they also received information on the support offered to the sector, including the support offered to the sector on funding applications. Information was also received on the Social Value and volunteering opportunities support offered.
- 3.6 The Network representatives regularly consult with the Network to ensure that the agenda items reflect their requirements.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are requested
- To note the contents of the report and consider the opportunities and issues raised by the North VCSN.

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