

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

4. Washington Network (AVCSN) Progress Report

- 4.1 The Washington Network has continued to meet via Microsoft Teams and has kept in regular contact sharing information, opportunities and ideas.
- 4.2 The Area Network galvanised within days after the lock downs were declared and transformed their services to ensure they continued to support those in need across the area. Services continued to be delivered but in a different way.
- 4.3 SNCBC has led the Washington Area Hub and worked with the Council, CCG, Gentoo, VCS partners and volunteers to provide support for shopping, prescriptions, befriending, dog walking and many more services – dependent on the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities. In November further funding was provided to the Hubs to ensure those residents are supported throughout the Winter
- 4.4 The Area Hubs continued to support those residents still needing support and are implementing 'Personal Pathway Plans' to determine appropriate referrals.
- 4.5 Network organisations and partners were also invited to apply to for further funding to support households over the winter
- 4.6 The 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.
- 4.7 The VCS Alliance is now distributing the Sectors E bulletin
- 4.8 Washington Network has met twice since the last Committee meeting and report.

At the meeting in October the Network received an update on the VCS Alliance, the Wellbeinginfo.org site, and the proposal for a 'Common Ground Gardening Project at the Washington Old Hall. The next meeting is scheduled December 7th 10am - hopefully the first face to face meeting in a while.

- 4.9 The Washington Area Networks are working together to produce the Network's Annual Report - which will be presented to the Washington Area Committee's March 2022 meeting

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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