

29 JUNE 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 network met April 2022 and again June 2022. At the April meeting the network welcomed a presentation on the Stephenson Trail from Cultural Spring. At the June meeting the network welcomed a presentation from Actives Families on the Wellbean Machine, Sunderland City Council on the Weed Killing pilot, Youth Almighty on the Barnes Park West Area Event, and Sunderland City Council on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Groups also shared details on activities been delivered across the West.
- 3.2 As part of the West Neighbourhood Investment Plan the West Area Neighbourhood and Community Board are working in partnership with a variety of partners including Sunderland VS Alliance and are reviewing opportunities to utilise existing and vacant community buildings and assets to support the creation of cultural hubs, leisure activities and safe places to bring the community together. West VCS groups were asked to complete a Taking Stock Survey. The information gathered from this survey will help identify how Organisations can be supported in running their Centre, and / or Organisation, which could include: providing training, purchasing equipment, funding extra sessions, etc.
- 3.3 A Connectedness event designed by Sunderland Wellbeing Network was held at Silksworth Youth and Community Centre in April. The aim of the event was to connect local people from the area with what is happening in the West area of the city. The event was themed around the five ways for wellbeing connect, take notice, keep learning, be active and give.
- 3.4 West Area Organisations continue to work together to distribute Round 2 of the Sunderland City Council Household Support Funding. The Funding available is to cover the period June to September 2022 to help trusted partners working in communities to support vulnerable households to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling due to further increases in the cost of living and financial pressures with food, energy, and other essentials. Immediate need does not mean that the household is in crisis or needs to be in crisis to get help.
- 3.5 West Area partner organisations have completed an EOI to continue to address holiday hunger in the West Area. Organisations would like to provide additional activities which will

complement the proposed Holiday Activities and Food funded offer and ensure all school aged children and young people have access to activities and food each school holiday period throughout Summer 2022 until May 2023

- 3.6 Bill Leach West VCS rep has decided to step down as West Rep. The network would like to thank Bill for all of his support over the years. A vacancy for West area rep was advertised to the Network. Nominations came in from 2 people. Both nominee's were asked to introduce themselves and why they felt they were the best person for the role at the network meeting. Network members were then asked to complete a voting slip. The new rep to join the existing reps is Karen Noble of Pallion Action Group.
- 3.7 Our Network representative Joanne Laverick continues to attend various Strategic and operational meetings with the Sunderland VS Alliance.
- 3.8 As part of the West VCS Network report West Area youth providers and Sunderland All Together Consortium have been invited to come along to the West Area Committee meeting and provide an update on the West Youth Activities and West ASB project

#### **4. Recommendation**

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

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