

14th JULY 2020

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.

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

- 3.1 The North VCS Network have not met since February 2020 due to COVID-19. The Network has kept in regular contact sharing information and ideas.
- 3.2 Regular funding bulletins have been provided to the Network to ensure VCS organisations are kept informed of funding opportunities available.
- 3.3 The North VCS Network became galvanised within days after the lock down was declared and transformed their services to ensure they continued to support those in need from across the North. Whilst many centres had to close services continued to be delivered but in different ways. Examples include food parcels deliveries and collection points, activity packs, exercise, cookery, quizzes, craft activities and training on social media.
- 3.4 Southwick Neighbourhood Youth Project, Sunderland Community Action Group, Sunderland North Community Business Centre and Friends of Fulwell have worked with the Council, CCG, Gentoo and resident volunteers to provide support for shopping, prescription pick-ups, befriending, dog walking and many more services. Hundreds of residents across the North have been supported, the network strengthened and identified what strong communities we have.
- 3.5 As COVID-19 restriction are gradually being revised by the Government organisations from across the network are coming together to share ideas on how they can re-open safely and offer services and activities to our communities. It is expected that activity programmes will look very different to previous years as the need to work within guidelines and restrictions are followed whilst respecting social distancing and implementing rigorous hygiene procedures.

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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