

22 SEPTEMBER 2021

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 West VCS Network met virtually in June 2021. At the meeting the network welcomed presentations on the Community Wealth, VCS Alliance, Energising Sunderland and the Digital Employment tool. Groups also shared details on activities being delivered in centres across the West.
- 3.3 At the September meeting, the network received presentations from NE Youth, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) awareness and Home Group as well as participants sharing information on what their groups have been involved in.
- 3.4 The collaboration of West Area VCS groups to support the Targeted Covid Community Champions project is working well.
- 3.5 Groups from across the Area delivered activities for the Big Lunch and holiday activities for young people. As restrictions lifted centres began to amend their delivery and centres are seeing residents return to enjoy the various activities.
- 3.6 Community Chest and Walk and Talk budgets have continued to support the VCS to deliver activities and support to residents across the West.
- 3.7 The VCS reps have been involved in the organising alongside the Alliance team for the 'Let's Talk VCS' Event which is taking place on the 7th October. The VCS Alliance manager and temporary Community Support Worker have introduced themselves to the VCS network and are busy making contact with groups from across the area.

4. Recommendation

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

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