

16 MARCH 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 has not had a virtual network meeting since December 2020, but have met as small groups to work together on specific topics.
- 3.2 West area groups who are involved in the Winter Covid 19 delivery set up a What's App group. This has proven to be a very successful method to share information with each other.
- 3.3 A collaboration of West Area VCS groups have come together to submit an application to Community Resilience for theme 2 of the Covid 19 Mental Health support.
- 3.4 Pallion Action Group and Youth Almighty Project continue to work with the Council, CCG, Gentoo and volunteers to provide support for shopping, prescriptions, to local residents in the West who are Clinically and Extremely Vulnerable.
- 3.5 Organisations from across the network have continued to operate throughout lockdown, often working with support bubbles of individuals or remotely. Activity programs have continued to look very different to ensure organisations are working within government guidelines to keep everyone safe by respecting social distancing and implementing rigorous hygiene procedures.
- 3.6 Community Chest and Walk and Talk budgets have supported the VCS to deliver activities and support to residents across the West.
- 3.7 Sunderland City Council in its continued commitment to support a thriving VCS in the city seeks to bring additional capacity to the sector through the recruitment of 5 Community Support Workers'

4. Recommendation

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

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