

15 November 2017

## REPORT OF COALFIELD AREA VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR NETWORK

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report provides an update with regard to the Coalfield Area Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) 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 the Networks 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 Coalfield Area Network delegates will present a report to each Area Committee meeting informing Members of activity, progress, issues and concerns of the sector.

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

The Coalfield VCSN has met three times since the last Area Committee in June 2017.

#### 3.1 July 2017

The July VCS Network meeting took a different format to usual meetings. A Cookery Demo and tasting session took place, and local groups and organisations set up 'stalls' to provide information and advice on the services and support they had on offer. This was a great networking opportunity and showcased the wide range of subject areas covered by Network members.

The Canny Kitchen delivered an interactive cookery demonstration and tasting session to the group. Tip sheets on menu planning and recipes were handed out. For copies of the tip sheets please contact [pauline.hopper@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:pauline.hopper@sunderland.gov.uk).

In addition to Network members, 10 adult residents and 7 young residents were in attendance

#### 3.2 September 2017

### Tall Ships Races 2018

Ian Flannery of Tall Ships Races 2018 gave overview of the event. The race will start at Sunderland on 11<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> July 2018. There are 80 ships expected. Area Committee has sponsored a number of sail trainees and sail ambassadors will be visiting schools and communities to promote this great opportunity.

350 volunteers are needed to make the tall ships work, Ian is the chief liaison officer for the volunteer offer and can be contacted on [ian.flannery@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:ian.flannery@sunderland.gov.uk) for more information. Cllr Lawson informed the meeting that the Area Committee has made funding available to coalfield community groups to be involved with tall ships event, whether that be in arts and crafts tall ship themed events or something else, so the coalfields are included and involved in the tall ships 2018.

Ian informed the group that Maxim brewery will be brewing a beer for the tall ships 2018. There will be a competition to name the beer in the Sunderland Echo and Sun FM.

### Job Centre

Susan Stimpson and Alison Roberts from Houghton Job Centre attended VCS for the first time, they would like to build relationships with the local community and find out what other support is

out in the community. They are currently working closely with ShARP and want to find out more about work in the community so they can support more people. Springboard currently deliver training to residents at Houghton Job Centre, this will be further developed in the coming months.

### **3.3 October 2017**

#### **Coalfield Digital Inclusion**

An update was given on the SIB call for projects which would provide a Coalfield Digital Inclusion programme with a Steering Group and a 'Digital Champion' element. The range of support available will be developed to meet the need within the community, including support to develop skills, access and engage with on-line services and facilities to improve their social outcomes across a broad range of themes, e.g. health, managing money, finding a job, accessing public services or simply socialising or shopping. Network members will continue to feed issues into meetings to ensure the changing needs of the community are met.

#### **Coalfield Area Priorities**

The group discussed a number of priorities and will carry out an exercise at the next meeting to identify current provision and gaps/need with regard to services and activities for children, young people and families. The information gathered will form part of an information collecting exercise to inform a Call for Projects from Area Committee.

#### **Recognising volunteers**

A volunteer celebration event took place at the Hetton Centre on Saturday 21 October. The event, arranged by SNCBC as part of the Step Up project, was very well attended, with around 120 people from 17 different organisations celebrating being part of a wider Coalfield volunteer team and identifying networking and joint working opportunities. Councillor Anne Lawson will present all volunteers with certificates throughout November 2017.

VCS Network meetings continue to be well attended and are seen as the recognised route for local organisations to receive and share information with Sunderland City Council, statutory and voluntary sector partners and each other. On average 30 – 35 people attend the meetings and over 100 are on the mailing list. All local organisations are encouraged to engage with the Network and take part in activities and meetings.

## **4. Recommendations**

### **4.1 Members are requested**

- To note the contents of the report
- To continue to support the Sector when developing and implementing actions against local priorities

Contact: Wendy Cook, Area Network Representative  
Debbie Ainscow, Area Network Representative  
Paul Finch, Area Network Representative