

21 September 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 Youth Almighty delivered the Barnes Park West Area Event with funding from the West Area Committee. It was held over 3 days with 15 schools attending from the West on the Thursday and Friday which was a total of 694 schoolchildren over the 2 days. The Saturday was attended by an estimated 10,000 people
- 3.2 West Area Organisations have reported an increase in demand in services whilst distributing Round 2 of the Sunderland City Council Household Support Funding. The funding ends in September and the Voluntary and Community Sector are bracing for a peak in demand for household support. It is anticipated that increased cost of living crisis and the DWP announcement around getting people into better paid jobs/more hours will put pressure on the VCS in the winter months to provide support for households.
- 3.3 Sunderland City Council & the West Area Committee have invited organisations to submit applications on a ward basis to deliver a series of environmental projects which will clean up local neighbourhoods and communities. There is also a call out for organisations to submit a bid for a West Area Minibus. Approval of successful grants for both these projects will be announced September 21st 2022.
- 3.4 West Area partner organisations started to deliver Holiday activities during the Summer holidays with a variety of West area projects delivering a range of healthy, fun activities alongside snacks and a meal for many young people. Free snow tubing sessions for organisations supported by West Area Committee were offered by Everyone Active as part of previous Area Committee funding. Free trips to Safety works have also been offered by the Safety Works Transport Project.
- 3.5 Network members have been updated regarding the Sunderland VCS Alliance West Community Support Worker securing a new job and leaving the Alliance on 28th October. The network would like to thank Sarah for her support and wish her well in her new job.

4. Recommendation

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

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