

14 June 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 March 2017.

3.1 March 2017

Family, Adult and Community Learning (FACL)

Karen Alexander, Sunderland City Council informed the group about opportunities to bid for grant awards from the Council's FACL service area, to deliver training courses in the academic year 2017/18. Key points discussed

- Improves level of skills for people in Sunderland
- Reaches into communities
- Tutors must be qualified. Subject to Ofsted inspection
- Contracts for one year, with payment by results
- All bidders must register with NEPO
- Opportunities advertised on Tuesday 18 April
- 2 stage bidding process
- Closing date for stage 1 bidding Friday 12 May
- For further information or support contact the FACL office on 561 2620 or email Karen.alexander@sunderland.gov.uk

Youth Social Action Project

The group received a presentation on the SIB funded Youth Volunteering project in Coalfields which allows young people (aged 11-19) to take part in positive action in their local community. 35 young people will be supported to make positive change in their community. Young people can enhance their CV, gain valuable work experience, increase confidence and self esteem and gain qualifications. If you know of any young people who want to take part or any organisation who has volunteering placements for young people please contact Wendy Cook on 0191 5373231 or wendycook@communityopportunities.co.uk

Shopping Centre Support

Tony Carlin from the Business and Innovation Centre (BIC) gave the group an update on the SIB funded Shopping Centre Support project. The project is designed to work with local traders and businesses to develop collective initiatives to improve their shopping areas and increase footfall. Tony is aiming to develop market days and celebration events with traders and community groups and will keep the Network updated and informed.

Moorsley and Easington Lane Big Local

Kevin Clark gave an update on the Big Local Community Fund which has grants of up to £500 available. Beneficiaries must come from the Big Local area. Maps available for clarity on the Big Local boundary. For further information contact kevin.clark@groundwork.org.uk

3.2 April 2017

The Stephenson Project

A heritage and art project to celebrate the work of George Stephenson in the development of the Hetton Railway is underway. Groups were given the opportunity to take part in workshops to make a glass tile which will form part of a larger sculpture. A total of 26 workshops have now been booked with over 300 people taking part.

Coalfield Area Priorities

The group undertook an exercise to identify priorities which were important to them and their communities. Priorities were presented to the Place and People Boards for consideration and have been incorporated into proposed work plans.

Free Training Opportunities

A number of training opportunities were offered to groups by SNCBC free of charge.

Level 1 Employability

Step Back to a Positive Future

Introduction to volunteering

Introduction to employability skills

Introduction to construction

Introduction to retail

Introduction to customer service skills

The above can be delivered locally if you have a suitable venue. Contact courses@communityopportunities.co.uk for more information

3.3 May 2017

First for Money Credit Union

Phil Browning gave an update on the rebranded credit union. Bridges Community Bank has become First for Money Credit Union and operates for the benefit of its members. There are no shareholders and any surplus is given to the members as dividends. There are currently 5000 members, 1700 are under 16.

The Credit Union offers savings and loan services and also offers a white goods service where people can apply for a loan and the credit union will source and deliver white goods on their behalf.

Local collection points are available at Easington Lane Primary School and ShARP. Anyone interested in finding out more about the benefits of First for Money or setting up a local collection point should contact Phil Browning for further information 07908171451. `

Wise Steps

Wise Steps offers support to over 18s who are unemployed and legally entitled to work in the UK. An individual action plan will be created for each person and a one to one coach is available for a period of up to 18 months, depending on need. Individuals are referred to specialist services and can also bring services to the client if necessary. Financial support for certain barriers such as DBS checks, birth certificates etc... is available if it will help the client into work.

A network of organisations deliver the programme throughout Sunderland. A digital inclusion officer based with Gentoo is available to support all clients of the Wise Steps programme. For further information contact Rebecca Moore rebecca.moore@thewisegroup.co.uk

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
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