

14<sup>th</sup> March 2023

## 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 in person in February 2023. At the meeting the network welcomed presentations on Next door neighbour, Household Support Fund, West Area Event 2023 and the Falls Prevention programme.
- 3.2 The network echoed a common pattern that they are seeing a significant increase in the number of residents accessing the support available, particularly in relation to the availability of food. The Bread and Butter Thing will be starting at Silksworth Youth and Community Centre from March 7<sup>th</sup>. The network welcomed this news and see it as a fantastic resource and support service for local residents
- 3.3 Warm Spaces are continuing to be a success across the West with some organisations having secure additional funding to offer activities and one to one support. These are called What Matters to You and Positive Steps. The Warm Spaces funding ends April 2023 and we anticipate that other areas of support will be looked at for the VCS.
- 3.3 Household Support round 3 is currently still on offer till end of March 2023. The demand for this support has been unprecedented and the priority is those who have not received a significant cost of living payment from the Government. The VCS recognise the need for additional support through the cost-of-living crisis and will work with Sunderland City Council to support those who are struggling financially.
- 3.4 Sunderland's Strength and Balance programme is being ran by Active Families NE across the West for one year. The programme which starts w/c 13<sup>th</sup> March is free and for those people aged 55 plus that are at risk of falling or who have fallen. The programme will run across various times and venues across the West
- 3.5 Youth Almighty Project have announced they will be hosting the West Area Community Event in Barnes Park. The focus this year will be improving physical and mental wellbeing of residents. The event will take place 29<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July and once again local West Area schools will be invited to attend for the first 2 days.

- 3.6 Holiday Hunger was delivered through the February half term and was well attended with organisations providing activities and a meal for all children participating.

#### **4. Recommendation**

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

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