

WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE
15th December 2016

REPORT OF WASHINGTON AREA COMMUNITY VOLUNTARY SECTOR NETWORK

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report provides an update with regard to the Washington Area Community and Voluntary Sector 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 each Area Network at Area Committee taking forward issues on behalf of the whole VCS in the area and reporting back, providing a two-way flow of communication.
- 2.2 Washington Area Network delegates will present a report to each Area Committee meeting informing Members of activity, progress, issues and concerns of the sector.

3. Washington Network

- 3.1 In Washington the VCS is made up of a wide range of organisations ranging from independent local branches of national charities through to small, totally voluntary, community groups. Collectively these organisations provide Washington residents with a wide range of local services, activities and opportunities and have a significant role within community life here.
- 3.2 At the last meeting the Area Committee supported the Network in encouraging collaboration with Area Committee to deliver shared priorities. A Washington Community Plan is being developed with 4 key priorities identified. Progress against those priorities is as follows:
- **Priority 1: The support and development of a Community Hub.** A number of key organisations have responded re resources and support they can offer to smaller groups.
 - **Priority 2: A Volunteer Plan for Washington. Co-ordinating, supporting, matching offers and opportunities, communication.** In line with the Area VCS Network priority regarding supporting volunteers, the CVDO Officer has agreed to facilitate a meeting to see how best we can take this forward. Joint volunteer training, referrals amongst organisations and other economies of scale to be discussed
 - **Priority 3: Washington Partnership – committed to working together and sharing, structured approach to funding opportunities.** Key leads met to agree how best to embed effective collaboration. Active partners who are willing to work together to take forward both shared priorities of the sector and the Area Committee priorities are the Washington Trust, Washington Millennium Centre, MIND, SNCBC, Sunderland Carers, Foundation of Light and VCAS. A further scoping meeting will be held to map out key priorities to focus on, areas of work organisations wish to progress, what opportunities are there, and which partner would do what. It is anticipated the results of this exercise will be included in the Network's Annual Report which will be presented to the March Area Committee
 - **Priority 4: Communication** – use Wellbeing.info as a platform. Develop a 'Network' resource. Promote self-management of directory. Regular e mails and bulletins to inform members when something of interest goes on. Information Officer key to keeping everything up to date and co-ordinating site/pages. Better use of social media, websites and newsletters. Promote our message.

Members are requested to note work continues with the Network to develop the plan and the above priorities. Proposals for action will be included in the Annual Report of the Network, which will be presented to Members at the March Area Committee

- 3.3 The Network also proposed revisiting the issue of capacity, in the context of being able to collaborate and deliver shared priorities. This will be an agenda item at the next meeting

4. Recommendations

4.1 Members are requested

- To note the contents of the report and consider the opportunities and issues raised by the Washington ACVSN

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