

Sunderland Voluntary & Community Sector Networks

Terms of Reference

Aims:

The Voluntary & Community Sector Networks aims are:

- To develop the capacity and influence of the VCS across the City.
- To work together to build relationships within communities and between communities and local services
- Recognised route of Council engagement with the VCS
- To work together to develop and share good local VCS practice.
- To provide three delegates to represent the area VCS at Area Committees, and at Area Boards where relevant, influencing strategic policies and practice that affects local communities and the VCS. The three delegates will represent the whole VCS in their area at the Area Committee and the Boards rather than their own organisational interests.

Objectives

- To maximise the opportunity to have a constructive dialogue and ways of working between the Council and wider VCS organisations activity.
- To support the development and delivery of Local Area Plans in meeting communities needs, and building the community's capacity to engage in the development and delivery of services.
- To identify and respond to community cohesion and social inclusion issues or concerns in order to create opportunities for integration and improving longer term engagement and involvement.
- To demonstrate the value of the VCS and the positive impact made by the sector.
- To determine three delegates to represent the VCS Network at Area Committee who will take forward issues on behalf of the whole VCS in the area and report back. Those delegates will also attend an Area board where relevant.
- To agree a VCS Co Chair, annually, for the VCS Network (the Co-Chair being one of the three delegates to attend Area Committee)
- Be consulted on future Council plans and strategies
- Attract and secure external funding into the area/City

Membership

Membership is open to all VCS organisations which operate in Sunderland. Membership of the network can also comprise of representatives from any sector working or volunteering in the area.

This can be representatives from public and statutory authorities such as the Council, Councillors, Police and Health Services or other organisations such as Gentoo, local schools and businesses who have a commitment to working with and supporting the VCS

Organisations must have an operational base within the area to represent the VCS Network at the Area Committee. However, any organisation that operates across Sunderland is welcome to attend any VCS Network.

Meetings

- Meetings to be held approximately every six weeks or as determined by each VCS Network.
- Support will be provided by Sunderland City Council's Members Support & Community Partnership Service. This support will include, for example, secretariat support for meetings, support to understand specific agenda items through briefing notes, facilitating collaborative working in line with Local Area Priorities, 1-2-1 meetings, presentations, facilitation of pre-meetings.
- Sunderland City Council will support the network operating under a co chairing arrangement involving the Area Committee Chair and a Network delegate.
- Partner organisations can be invited to take part/ present items / share information on a specific topic in a format determined by each Area Network.

VCS Area Committee Representation

Nomination Process:

- Three delegates to represent the VCS at Area Committee as partners will be determined through a self-nomination process
- Three delegates must be working or volunteering within a VCS organisation that will be encouraged to follow the principles of the Sunderland Compact.
- The self-nomination process will be carried out by a rolling programme in April every year, where one of the representatives will be given an opportunity to stand down. Cycle of induction and training can be arranged for new members whilst retaining the expertise of the other two representatives. The self-nomination process will also be carried out if a delegate stands down earlier.
- Positions are to be made openly available and advertised in the local area to VCS Network members with appropriate consultation time.
- Where more applications are received than the number of positions then a selection process will be considered within the Network. Each nominee will be expected to deliver a presentation on their strengths, suitability and reason as to why they want to be a representative prior to a decision being made by the VCS organisations present.

Key Tasks:

1. Attend Area Committee meetings approximately four meetings per annum and additional meetings such as Area boards as appropriate (on invitation), site visits and training sessions from time to time.
2. Reading papers and reports in preparation for committee meetings
3. Ensuring feedback and communication between Area Committee and VCS Networks is consistent.
4. Respecting the views of other members and taking forward to Area Committee the opinions of other members or contributors where this will lead to an improvement for the Area and City, and supporting other members in the process of change.
5. Being prepared to learn from others and from good practice elsewhere and to further develop the breadth of your knowledge of your sector's role within the Area and City.
6. Attending City Wide Area Representatives meetings to share good practice, enable a consistent city wide approach to the networks and to identify possible collaboration opportunities.
7. Supporting the production of Reports to deliver to each Area Committee and an annual review at the end of each municipal year, in line with the Area Committee's annual review schedule.
8. Engaging in an induction programme to the Area Committee.

Key attributes:

1. Interest in local matters.
2. All should be encouraged to follow the principles of the Sunderland Compact.
3. Representatives should seek to represent the VCS Network (rather than own organisational interests), therefore representatives should have a broad perspective across the Area / VCS.
4. Demonstrate commitment to the VCS.
5. Effective communication skills, particularly listening and questioning skills.
6. Ability to weigh up information.

Self Nomination Form

WASHINGTON VCS NETWORK REPRESENTATION TO WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE

Name:.....
.....

Organisation/Group:

Address:.....
.....
.....
.....

Telephone number/ email:

- 1. In no more than 100 words please state clearly your connection with the Washington Area.**

- 2. In no more than 100 words please explain why you are nominating yourself for this role.**

- 3. In no more than 200 words, should you be successfully nominated, how you will you ensure that you represent the views of the wider voluntary and community sector in Washington and feedback to the Washington VCS Network after Area Committee meetings?**

I confirm that I would like to be considered as a VCS representative to attend the Washington Area Committee on behalf of the whole of the Washington VCS Network.

Signed:

Position in Organisation:

Date:.....

Please complete and return this form to:

**Karon Purvis
Area Community Development Lead (Washington)
Member Support and Community Partnerships Service
Strategy, Partnerships and Transformation Directorate
City of Sunderland Council, Room 3.98. Civic Centre, Sunderland SR2 7DN**

Tel: 0191 561 2449

E-mail: karon.purvis@sunderland.gov.uk

Role Description

- A. To represent the VCS on the Washington Area Committee by:
 - Attending meetings
 - Assessing the evidence and information provided to form views and opinions
 - Asking appropriate questions on issues at committee
 - Contributing to the formulation of committee recommendations
- B. Expressing the views of the VCS at Washington Area Committee
Providing a two way information flow between the Washington Area Committee and the Washington VCS Network
- C. Reporting back to the VCS via the Area VCS Networks

Key attributes:

- 1. All VCS representatives should operate within the principles of the Sunderland Compact**
2. Organisations must have an operational base within the area to represent the Area VCS Network at the Area Committee; however, any organisation that operates across Sunderland is welcome to attend any Area VCS Network
3. Organisations must be signed up to and operate within the Sunderland Compact
4. Representatives should seek to represent the whole Area VCS Network (rather than own organisational interests), therefore representatives should have a broad perspective across the Area / VCS
5. Demonstrate commitment to the VCS
6. Effective communication skills, particularly listening and questioning skills
7. Ability to weigh up information
8. Interest in local matters