**Note of meeting of the Third Sector Strategy Group (TSSG) – 15 July 2020**

1. **Present:** Raymond Branton, Chair (Family and Community Development), Alan McCloskey (VSGWL), Diane Cameron (WLSEN), James Penman, Minute Taker (VSGWL), Jay Haston (Men Matter/Women Matter), David MacDonald (Whitburn and District CDT), Elizabeth Stevenson (Signpost), John Moore (Lothian Community Transport Services), Karen Nailen (Citizens Advice Bureau), Helen Davis (West Lothian Youth Action Project), Angela Moohan (The Larder), Matt Pearce (West Calder and Harburn CDT), Margaret Bryson, Andrew Murray (Safe Families), Angie Mason (WLSEN), Ally Graham (Beechbrae), June Dickson (Environmental Heath)

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| **ITEM** | **KEY POINTS** | **ACTION BY** |
|  | **Apologies**Raymond welcomed everyone to the meeting.Apologies – Joanna Van Den Berg (Firefly Arts), Dawn Henderson (Families Outside), Stuart Barrie (Homestart), Lisa Drinnen (Community Action Blackburn), Mark Kennedy (Circle). |  |
|  | **Previous minutes** The action notes were accepted as an accurate account of the previous meeting. |  |
|  | **Matters arising****Update from Covid 19 Response/Writing Group**The group has met twice since the previous TSSG meeting and consists of Diane, Joanna, Angela, Silence and Karen. The purpose was to construct a response to the Scottish Governments Economic Recovery Group but the date for this has now passed. It was suggested instead that a letter be written to senior officials within council and elected members to highlight the worth of the Third Sector. Very few people have had the chance to read the minutes of the meeting. It was also suggested that the TSSG put together a summit to highlight the work carried out during the pandemic, to demonstrate the worth of the Third Sector, the contribution made to the economy and strengthening of partnership working with council. It would also be used to highlight the need for investment in the Third Sector. A great opportunity to work together to create a vision, and make people aware, of the contribution the sector can make towards Covid recovery.It was asked if organisations could respond to the email sent out with their opinions of the summit and what should be included, so that everyone has their say.The aim is to raise awareness of the services the Third Sector can and do already provide. Also, to highlight how promptly organisations have adapted in response to the pandemic to best help the community.The CCP board met in May last year where they themed the meeting around the Third Sector. Information was provided on what the Third Sector does and what services they provide, it was well received but was only presented to a limited audience. There is great value in doing things like this, especially when decision makers are present.The draft writing group paper seems to be a positive ask and does not come across as a ‘begging letter’. VSGWL are keen to support the idea of a summit meeting and would like to bring it to the attention of the Economic Recovery and Growth Group who are meeting on the 16th July to start an open dialog with the council.There has been a similar exercise carried out in the Edinburgh area, which was very well received, and a shift was observed afterwards on the way the local authorities and their partners viewed the Third Sector. June is willing to share resources to help the writing group going forward.Some examples included were:* Info graphs showing the different values attached to the Third Sector.
* Statistics showing how many hours volunteers spent volunteering and monetary and other values affixed to this.
* Statistics on how much money the voluntary sector brings into the community through external sources.

It is recognised that there is very limited time to organise this, but it is felt this it is necessary to highlight the worth of the Third Sector ahead of any new funding decisions.Development Trusts are keen to link in with the rest of the voluntary sector as they have some clear statistics available from a previous similar project. This will be progressed with the Development Trust Forum.It was suggested that the Third Sector could be referred to as the “Solution Sector” following their prompt response to Covid-19, where they repurposed staff, volunteers and resources to directly benefit the community wherever it was needed. Communities would have struggled during Covid without the help of the Third Sector. There are statistics available from the food bank that evidences this, but collective figures need collated from the rest of the sector.This summit will not be directly about funding but rather about receiving credit for the hard work across the Third Sector. However, it will link in nicely ahead of any funding decisionsThere has been great work done so far but, this is only a starting point, there still needs to be more information fed in from other voluntary organisations. It is apparent that all departments of the council need to be aware of the sector and its benefits to the community. It was reiterated how important it is to ‘strike while the iron is hot’.A clear time scale is needed, a date in early September was suggested. It is proposed that an expansion of the writing group was needed to become a planning group. Alan advised that VSGWL will take on a supporting role to help with coordination of the proposed summit and could support venue hire costs.June has also agreed to join the aforementioned planning group and the Development Trust Forum will discuss appointing a representative at their next meeting. Sub-groups may be set up to deal with specific tasks that may arise. An independent Chair/Facilitator will be appointed by the planning group for the day of the summit.The planning group will meet weekly before the next TSSG meeting and will provide an update then. An email be sent around the planning group members to arrange dates to meet via zoom.All voluntary organisations are being encouraged to contact their elected representatives and councillors to attend the summit. The more invites they receive will put pressure on them to attend. It was asked if there could be a document available at the summit for people to sign as a pledge of their commitment.If possible, the summit should ideally take place face to face at a venue which is yet to be arranged with enough space to allow for different rooms for different presentations. A venue will be decided by the planning group and budget for it will be arranged. The Larder have offered to provide food. | **All****Alan (VSGWL)****June (Environmental Health)****Development Trust Forum****All****Alan (VSGWL)****Alan (VSGWL)****All****Planning Group** |
|  | **Council Revenue Funding Progress Update**After the last TSSG meeting where Dougie and Alice attended, a 10-point email was sent outlining the anxieties and concerns that arose after they left the meeting. There has been no response to this or to the working group paper sent a few weeks ago. There was a meeting with Dougie yesterday where it was asked for a formal written response. There is frustration as there has been no movement made since the TSSG meeting two weeks ago. Dougie assured that our voice has been heard and to await the formal response.The next Working Group meeting has been set for Tuesday 4th August.There was a general concern around the timeline set but the council for making decisions surrounding the application process and criteria for funding next year. The budget has been set but the decision as to who gets funded and criteria for applying has been devolved to officers.It was suggested that it was be a good idea to get some commitment from officers high up in the council to present at the summit e.g. Council Chief Executive, this will add value and strength to the overall message. |  |
|  | **VSGWL update**VSGWL have a pool of 57 people that have registered an interest in becoming trustees. This has been an extremely positive response as trustee roles are notoriously hard to fill. Some organisations have already made requests with positive outcomes. If any organisations have a need for new trustees over the coming weeks and months, please contact VSGWL. Over the coming weeks, people who signed up through Ready Scotland will be contacted to see if they are still available to volunteer. If organisations have any volunteer opportunities they need filled, please contact VSGWL as soon as possible.  | **All to consider** |
|  | **Organisation updates & misc**If any organisation would like any topics/issues to be added to the TSSG agenda, please send details to Raymond via email.WLSEN and Social Enterprise Academy provided 4 sessions on mental health, support and collaboration. It was identified that there was a need for a more collaborative approach across mental health providers and referrers in West Lothian.The 3 main objectives are:* Initial mapping of mental health organisations in West Lothian
* Collaborative working across providers, referrers and users
* Make resources more accessible for users

WLSEN will be distributing pro-forma to the sector along with the vision statement.Helen will be in contact with everyone with a view to getting the children and families meetings back up and running. | **WLSEN****Helen (WLYAP)** |
|  | **Next meeting date**The next meeting will take place via Zoom on Wednesday 5 August at 1pm |  |