**Note of meeting of the Third Sector Strategy Group (TSSG) – 19 January 2021**

1. **Present:** Raymond Branton, Chair (Family and Community Development), Diane Cameron (WLSEN), James Penman, Minute Taker (VSGWL), Helen Davis (West Lothian Youth Action Project), Alan McCloskey (VSGWL), Angie Mason (WLSEN), David MacDonald (Whitburn and District CDT), Lesley Mount (Signpost), Lisa Drinnan (Community Action Blackburn) Matt Pearce (West Calder and Harburn CDT), Brian Pringle (WLDAS), Alan Davidson (The Bridge), Monica Mochar (Wellbeing Scotland), Karen Nailen (Citizens Advice Bureau), Stuart Barrie (Homestart), Alison Wright (Carers of West Lothian), Mark Kennedy (Circle), Niamh Brannan, Joanna Van Den Berg (Firefly Arts), Yvonne Lawton (NHS Lothian).

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| **ITEM** | **KEY POINTS** | **ACTION BY** |
|  | **Apology**  Angela Weir (West Calder Hub). |  |
|  | **Welcome**  Raymond welcomed everyone to the meeting.  **Update/presentation from Yvonne Lawton (NHS Partnership Manager).**  **Previous minutes**  The action notes were accepted as an accurate account of the previous meeting on 15 December.  **Review of actions from last meeting**  Leader Support Group  The Leader support group met for the first time with 14 people in attendance. Feedback was positive and everyone agreed it was valuable. The next meeting is scheduled for 12th February and meetings will take place monthly. May look to move date in future as Friday’s are not suitable for everyone.  Third sector Community support fund  22 organisations have been funded, 11 new orgs and 11 that have received funding previously. There is a document available on West Lothian Council’s Coins (Councill Executive meeting) explaining the breakdown of monies and the allocation. Some organisations had been successful but received partial awards. Some organisations that had been unsuccessful would however receive monies from reserves in the Modernisation and Improvement Fund.  It was the consensus of the TSSG members the decision to delay communication the outcome of applications until mid-January had been detrimental and had a negative effect on Voluntary Organisations. More effective communication and how the process is managed from West Lothian Council is needed going forward.  Alan and Diane will follow up with a review of what happened during the process especially around communication. The review would also consider the scheduling of future application processes to ensure this is completed earlier in the year, rather than in the run up to Christmas.  It has become clear that training, workshops, and support is required to help organisations with future funding applications.  It is encouraging to hear that there will be a debrief of this whole process to improve and fine tune things for future years.  It would be helpful if clear feedback could be given to those organisations who were not successful to aid them to improve for next time. The whole process has been very stressful for all involved. It has been a learning curve for the sector and the council.  It was pointed out that organisations should be applying for funding from other sources to cover the shortfall and to make sure if they are unsuccessful in receiving funding from the voluntary organisation revenue budget their organisations can stay afloat.  Communication issues have only added to frustration in a highly competitive situation. It was acknowledged that there was always going to be winners and losers.  Alan and Diane were thanked for all their hard work and time they dedicated as part of the assessment panel and for advocating for the sector.  **Sector updates/how are we all doing?**  Children and Families Forum update  No update as the meeting was put off until February.  Race Forum  No update as there was no representative at today’s meeting.  Community Development Trust update  No update from last meeting.  **Mental Health Group update**  The mental health forum has met. There has also been a meeting with Wendy Carmichael, who is the service manager of the community wellbeing hubs. She has been having a look through the website and has started sharing information with her staff. She is keen to start referring clients to Third Sector organisations. Going forward, the WLSEN website will contain links, under the tab Mental Health Forum, to all the mental health organisations who attend the forum. If anyone knows of orgs who do not attend the forum who you think would like added please signpost them to WLSEN. Things are heading in the right direction and there were 19 people in attendance at the latest forum.  **VSGWL update**  Very few applications have been received for the response, recovery, and resilience fund. This was a small pot of £9k available through Foundation Scotland. The deadline for the funding has now been extended and VSGWL have been contacting organisations directly and have been able to make recommendations for organisations to receive up to £1k each. It is hoped that this will be of some assistance.  Alan has been in discussion with the Robertson Trust who have pots of money available around poverty and trauma. They have 3 significant programmes for community/voluntary organisations to apply for funding. The match funding arrangements have been relaxed and larger organisations can apply for up to £50k a year for up to 5 years. Organisations are urged to pursue this type of funding.  Alan has been involved in logistical meetings regarding the vaccine roll out in West Lothian. One of the premises being used as a vaccination centre will be the Pyramids in Bathgate. VSGWL will be offering the use of volunteers in a meet and greet capacity from the database of volunteers through the Ready Scotland programme that was set up at the beginning of the pandemic. The centre will be open from 8am – 6.30pm, 7 days a week and starts 15 February. Volunteers will be required for 3 shifts per day. It is important that the NHS communicate key information to the public. VSGWL will be circulating information as it becomes available.  **WLSEN update**  Rosemary to be added to the Mental Health Forum mailing list.  WLSEN will be contacting organisations to make sure that they still want to remain members of the network and are still eligible.  Senscot, the overriding Social Enterprise in Scotland, are asking WLSEN to ask their members if they are also happy to be members of Senscot which would include having a voice at their meetings.  There is a push on Social Enterprises taking the lead on the climate change agenda with COP26 taking place in Glasgow in November. WLSEN will circulate further information on this over the next couple of weeks.  **AOCB**  Awaiting a response from Simon McGowan, the Third Sector representative, regarding the Mental Health monies. The positive news from the meeting is that they do want the Third Sector involved. Confusion over the first tranche of money as this must be allocated before the end of March. Helen will circulate any news when its available. | **Alan/Diane**  **Diane/Angie**  **Helen** |
|  | **Next meeting dates**  16 February 2021 via Zoom.  Raymond thanked everyone and closed the meeting. |  |