**Note of meeting of the Third Sector Strategy Group (TSSG) – 8 September 2020**

1. **Present:** Raymond Branton, Chair (Family and Community Development), Diane Cameron (WLSEN), James Penman, Minute Taker (VSGWL), Elizabeth Stevenson (Signpost), Helen Davis (West Lothian Youth Action Project), Lisa Drinnen (Community Action Blackburn), Heather Watson (WLDAS), Alan McCloskey (VSGWL), Alison Wright (Carers of West Lothian), Joanne Van Den Berg (Firefly Arts), Angie Mason (WLSEN), Tracy Murdoch (Kidzeco), Angela Moohan (The Larder).

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| **ITEM** | **KEY POINTS** | **ACTION BY** |
|  | **Apologies**  Raymond welcomed everyone to the meeting.  Apologies – David MacDonald (Whitburn and District CDT), Matt Pearce (West Calder and Harburn CDT), Stuart Barrie (Home Start), Jay Haston (Men/Women Matter), June Dickson (Environmental Health), Koen Van Der Straeten (The Brock), Beth McLean (Safe Families), Mark Kennedy (Circle). |  |
|  | **Previous minutes**  The action notes were accepted as an accurate account of the previous meeting.  **Matters Arising**  CPP survey results report to be circulated when it has been made available.  Children and Families Forum still to be organised.  **Working Group Update**  A meeting is organised for this week with a draft paper being available for discussion. This will be formatted into a report and presented at the Council Executive meeting on 6th October. When things are finalised at the meeting, applications should be made available soon after. This is to allow for decisions to be made by the end of December deadline. The Working Group will hopefully have a role in supporting the development of the guidance and the application. The timeline for this being released is mid-October with 9th being the target date. The voluntary organisation budget is likely to be around £400,000-£500,000 with the remaining being used for commissioned work. The criteria will likely be based on the Health and Wellbeing survey themes. More information will be made public the week before the Council Executive meeting.  Work that will be commissioned has not yet been announced and it appears that organisations have not been contacted yet. The maximum amount that can be applied for may be £50,000.  The modernisation fund will be held in reserve for the 3rd sector and may be released next year depending on whether there is a second wave of Covid-19.  It was asked if an impact report could be drawn up to highlight how the reduced budget will impact the 3rd sector. It was added that the budget will add up to the same amount of funding for the sector, it is only divided differently than previous years.  Some believe that by the Council commissioning some work, these organisations will have a clearer outline of what they are expected to deliver and will receive closer monitoring that will help build stronger links with the Council.  Organisations would welcome the chance to be part of commissioned work.  The Working Group members assured that they are fighting our corner and putting forward the concerns from the TSSG. They feel that things are slowly moving forward, but there is still frustration there. The Working Group are lobbying hard on behalf of the sector. Things will be clearer after the Council Executive meeting on 6th October where hopefully everything will be ratified. It was suggested that the TSSG write directly to the West Lothian Council Chief Executive but it may now be too late for this to do any good. Councillor Sullivan has been informed of the Working Groups frustrations and appears to be taking these on board.  Council are aiming to organise a PDSP meeting by the end of this month.  The Working Group agreed to send out an update as soon as it was available.  **Summit**  Thanks’ were given to the summit planning team that organised the event. It was a great success. The only small issue was with the break-out rooms, but regardless, great conversations took place and the feedback has been positive. All the speakers were excellent. Congratulations were given by our MP and MSPs on a great event.  There were 95 attendees. The next step is to analyse the feedback to see how it can be used going forward. This has been a good start, but more work is needed to keep the momentum going. It was suggested that more events like this are needed at least twice, if not more a year. It is hoped that the summit has helped shift from the ‘begging bowl’ mentality to a more investment like position and partnership approach. The Summit highlighted the improved partnership working that has begun during the pandemic and a willingness for it to continue. It also highlighted the need for the Third Sector to be properly resourced.  It was recognised that this is only the beginning and that what has been started now has to built upon. Further meetings/conferences must happen sooner rather than later to keep up momentum. The sector needs to seize the opportunity and lead the way.  It is hoped that a shortened highlight video of the Summit will be produced and widely distributed. The results from the surveys taken during the Summit will be shared when they are available.  It was suggested that the evidence/examples of good partnership working be used going forward to highlight the work of the third sector at future meetings relating to the summit.  **VSGWL update**  A meeting will take place next week to plan the next round of funding from the National Lottery.  There are still some volunteers that are interested in becoming trustee board members, any organisations interested should contact VSGWL. Several organisations have already utilised this offer and filled positions on their committees.  **WLSEN update**  The Recovery Fund should have been announced on 8th September with it opening on 15th September, but unsure if this is still the timeline.  **AOCB**  The issue of the lack of diversity within the TSSG has arisen and it was agreed that action should take place to increase diversity. A separate meeting will be held with organisations representing minority groups to identify what can be done to help them engage with the TSSG. Everyone agreed that this was the best way forward.  **Council Economic Recovery Plan**  It appears that West Lothian Council have not consulted with the sector and the Plan has not been made available. The document that has been seen by a few individuals, does not mention the Third Sector. It is felt that the working group should have been involved in producing this. The working group are meeting Alice on Thursday so will raise this matter then. An email will be sent round ahead of the next meeting with an update from the working group.  **Best wishes**  Happy retirement to Heather Watson from WLDAS and John Moore from LCTS. Best wishes from the TSSG. | **Alan**  **Helen**  **The Working Group**  **Working group**  **Alan/VSGWL**  **Diane**  **Raymond**  **The Working Group** |
|  | **Next meeting date**  The next meeting will take place via Zoom on Tuesday 29th September at 1pm |  |