

## **Health and Wellbeing Board**

**17 October 2016**

### **Health and Wellbeing Board – Voluntary Sector Membership**

#### **1. Purpose**

This report has been prepared on behalf of the Chairman following the Boards request at the last meeting to consider appointing a representative of the voluntary sector to the Board.

#### **2. Recommendations**

The Board is requested to decide whether to approve a change to its composition to enable a voting place to be allocated to a representative of Walsall Voluntary Action.

#### **3. Report detail**

- 3.1 At the last meeting, the Board approved a change in its composition to enable representation from the Police and Fire Services. During the discussion, the Board also asked for thought to be given to the inclusion of a representative of the voluntary sector who could also add value to the Boards discussions. Accordingly, the Chairman has approached Walsall Voluntary Action (WVA) as the recognised umbrella body in Walsall.
- 3.2 The Chief Executive of WVA has agreed that the organisation would provide a valuable contribution to the work of the Board and has provided the following supporting information:

“Walsall Voluntary Action (WVA) has provided infrastructure support for voluntary and community sector enterprises (VCSEs) operating within Walsall for over 30 years. Our offer has included capacity building support and representation in various forms, alongside delivery of Walsall’s Volunteer Centre.

The organisation has recently embarked on a programme of comprehensive redevelopment, supported by a three year funding agreement with contributions from Walsall Council, Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group and the VIEW Board (Visionary Investment Enhancement in Walsall, associated with Walsall Housing Group).

Our purpose is to support a strong and vibrant voluntary and community sector in Walsall, and to encourage and grow local social action. We will achieve this by building and leading an effective, independent and professional organisation which supports new and existing VCSEs to;

- develop, grow and sustain their activities for the future
- connect and collaborate with other VCSEs and partners across sectors
- promote their impact and influence local decisions about the communities they serve
- encourage and support residents to take up volunteering and other forms of active citizenship

We are now at an ideal stage of our redevelopment to join the Health and Wellbeing Board and provide:

- an independent and accountable voice for the VCS
- a consistent communication channel between the VCS and health and wellbeing partners
- support to engage the VCS in key consultations, providing links to community needs and assets vital to developing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and other evidence-led planning.
- advice on, and coordination of, external opportunities to support health and wellbeing priorities available through the VCS.
- links to coordinate our core capacity building activities in line with health and wellbeing priorities”.

3.3 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 sets a core membership for the Board which formed the basis of the current membership however, the Health and Wellbeing Board can also, at any time, appoint additional members as it thinks fit. Regulations provide that the Board does not need to be politically balanced.

3.4 Nationally, Health and Wellbeing Boards vary in their size and composition depending upon the priorities of the area and what works for those Authorities locally. On a practical level, Boards should be satisfied that its membership is of a size that enables the Board to function effectively and that Board members should be sufficiently senior to be clear about the extent that they are empowered to make collective decisions with the rest of the board without having to constantly refer back to their organisations. (This should be borne in mind when making substitutions at meetings).

#### **4. Implications for Joint Working arrangements:**

The Health and Wellbeing Board has established a Strategic Advisory Group which engages providers and other public bodies more generally in an informal way and which enables more detailed discussion on specific themes. However a closer working relationship with the voluntary sector at a higher strategic level could better enable the Board to access this source of local information and resources in order to improve services locally.

## 5. Health and Wellbeing Priorities:

Paragraph 3.2 sets out the contribution which Walsall Voluntary Action has said that it could make to shaping and informing the Boards priorities.

### Background papers

None

### Author

Helen Owen  
Democratic Services Officer

☎ 654522

✉ [helen.owen@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:helen.owen@walsall.gov.uk)