

Subject:	Volunteering Strategy for Brighton & Hove - 'Joining the Dots'		
Date of Meeting:	22 July 2010		
Report of:	Director of Strategy and Governance		
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Key Decision:	Yes	Forward Plan No: CAB17074	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 The Communities & Equality Team of the Strategy and Governance Department and the Economic Development has worked with the city Volunteer Centre and partners from across the city to develop a comprehensive Volunteering Strategy designed to increase the quantity and quality of volunteering opportunities in Brighton & Hove.
- 1.2 Volunteering in the city impacts upon people, organisations and society. Volunteering underpins the design and delivery of many local services, particularly in the health and care sectors and improves quality of life, both for volunteers and for the City as a whole. Volunteering helps the city meet various strategic targets, including those for social inclusion, mental and physical health, community safety, employability and strengthening communities.
- 1.3 The council is developing a volunteer policy to encourage staff to volunteer to help implement one of the recommendations in the city strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet formally adopts the city Volunteering Strategy, following the lead of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in March 2010.
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes that an action plan and an equalities impact assessment (EIA) are now being developed and will be completed by the autumn of 2010 to support implementation of the Volunteering Strategy.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 During 2009/10 the city Volunteering Strategy has been developed by the Volunteer Centre (part of local voluntary sector group 'Impetus') through a cross sector steering group with representatives from the council, Primary Care Trust (PCT), Brighton University and local voluntary groups working with volunteers.

- 3.2 Development of the strategy has been supported by funding from the City Employment & Skills Steering Group (CESSG) and Stronger Communities Programme (SCP).

Key findings from the development of the strategy are:

- Volunteering improves quality of life both for volunteers and the City
- Volunteering adds capacity to the City – “Organisations stated that the strongest benefit of volunteering related to service delivery; volunteering was the only way in which core services / projects / outputs were possible.”
- The number of volunteers in the City can be expanded through increasing the capacity of organisations to manage volunteers
- Disadvantaged people have specific support needs that require dedicated resourcing
- The recession is increasing the numbers wanting to volunteer but is also displacing more disadvantaged people from volunteering
- Good volunteer management and good matching are critical to retaining volunteers and to keeping people volunteering
- Increasing employer-supported volunteering schemes will not only increase volunteering opportunities but is likely to lead to employers taking greater account of volunteering experience when recruiting

Strategic priorities in the strategy action plan

- Increase numbers of volunteers in the City
- Expand access to volunteering for groups at risk of exclusion
- Increase recognition and value volunteers and volunteering
- Improve experiences for volunteers and the organisations they volunteer for
- Enable development: build and influence an environment that enables volunteering to have the maximum economic and social impact
- Ensure resources: measure the cost and impact of volunteering

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 3.3 Members are asked to note the excellent work that has underpinned the development of the city Volunteering Strategy. Brighton & Hove is one of the few cities in the country to have developed such a comprehensive strategy. This strategy has the potential to have significant impact across a range of council priorities, in particular improved service design and delivery, community engagement and providing a gateway to employment and learning opportunities.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 This strategy has been the subject of extensive consultation across the city over a period of 12 months and consultation continues over the content and priorities for the action plan. Consultation has taken place with a wide range of organisations that involve volunteers and with volunteers themselves. A cross sector steering group has been closely involved in developing the strategy from the start.
- 4.2 Updates on the strategy have twice been provided to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) prior to LSP adoption in March 2010.

4.3 Consultation has taken place through:

- Workshops
- On-line survey
- Focus Groups
 - Disabled People
 - People with mental health issues
 - LGBT People
 - BME People
 - Older People
 - Brokerage Agencies
 - Council and other public service officers and members
 - Commissioners

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Implementation of some of the recommended actions in the strategy will have financial implications and these will be identified and addressed in the development of the action plan. The council funds a wide range of volunteering activity in the city through discretionary grants. Officers will support partners to identify and access external funding for volunteer strategy implementation. The financial implications of the Employee Volunteering scheme are discussed in a separate report.

Finance Officer consulted: Anne Silley Date: 29/06/10

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The strategy is consistent with existing policies and procedures and does not raise any adverse legal implications

Lawyer consulted: Bob Bruce Date: 25/06/10

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The volunteering strategy aims to expand and improve the volunteering opportunities available to all equality groups. The strategy also has the potential to increase the volunteer support available to the work of organisations that reduce inequalities.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Many volunteers and volunteer involving groups have a strong interest in environment issues and sustainable development. The strategy has the potential to provide a significant boost to environmental sustainability activity in the city.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Many volunteers and volunteer involving groups have a strong interest in community safety issues and preventative work around crime and disorder. The

strategy has the potential to provide a significant boost to preventing crime and disorder, helping people feel safe and rehabilitating offenders.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Risk and opportunity management considerations have been taken into account throughout the development of the strategy. The main risks identified are:
- Volunteers displacing paid workers (a protocol with trade unions has been agreed to cover this nationally)
 - Well qualified and highly skilled volunteers displacing people with less skills/qualifications (there are actions in the strategy to mitigate against this happening).

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 This strategy supports many aspects of corporate and citywide strategies including the community strategy, council's corporate plan and more recent developments around 'A council the city deserves'. A stronger volunteering 'sector' improves services, builds stronger community engagement, involves more people in decision making, helps people into jobs and reduces inequalities.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Various options for the content and priorities of this strategy have been considered and continue to be evaluated in the process of developing the action plan.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 This report recommends that Members agree to formally adopt the city Volunteering Strategy in order to support a wider range of opportunities for volunteers across the city and a strengthening of community engagement in local services and wider civil society.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Joining the dots: a triple impact volunteering strategy for Brighton & Hove 2010 - 2015

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None