

# CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM CABINET MEMBER MEETING

## Agenda Item 24

Brighton & Hove City Council

**Subject:** *Libraries Volunteers Strategy*  
**Date of Meeting:** 6 September 2011  
**Report of:** *Director of Communities*  
**Contact Officer:** Name: *Sally McMahon* Tel: 29-6963  
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**Key Decision:** No Forward Plan No.  
**Wards Affected:** All

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to describe the current and proposed use of volunteers in Libraries Services, and to approve the Libraries Service Volunteers Strategy.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Volunteers Strategy is to develop a coherent volunteer programme to deliver a range of added value outcomes across libraries. A key principle of the strategy is that paid jobs will not be replaced by volunteers, and they will not be used for core library functions or to run libraries. Instead, volunteers will complement rather than replace the work of paid staff.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To approve the use of volunteers in libraries in accordance with the Volunteers Strategy as presented in appendix 1.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- 3.1 Public Libraries across the country use volunteers to supplement their services and this has been an established practice for many years. Brighton & Hove Libraries Services already use volunteers in the following ways:
  - Silver Surfers – volunteers help staff deliver one to one beginner sessions for people over 50.
  - Housebound library service – a few volunteers deliver books to housebound people and there is also a pilot project currently taking place in Hollingbury and Patcham in partnership with the Neighbourhood Care Scheme.
  - Homework Clubs – young volunteers periodically assist study support staff.
  - Summer Reading Challenge – young volunteers assist staff to run this annual reading project.
  - Council Connect - supporting digital inclusion in libraries by providing help with people using the internet, in particular, helping access council services online.

- 3.2 Volunteering in Brighton & Hove Libraries has been limited and adhoc as there was no dedicated resource to recruit and constantly support and manage the volunteers. Despite this, the number of people approaching libraries seeking to volunteer is increasing. In order to utilise, develop, increase and constantly manage and support this volunteering resource, the Libraries Service has recruited a dedicated volunteer manager.
- 3.3 The aims of the Volunteering Strategy are to:
- Best utilise partnerships across the city to build and enhance volunteering in libraries.
  - Ensure equality and diversity in volunteering opportunities and ensure access to all members of the community.
  - Ensure adequate resourcing of volunteering development in Libraries Services.
- 3.4 Volunteering needs to be mutually beneficial to volunteers and the Libraries Service systematically organises, managed and supported to ensure diversity and involvement of all our communities. Research into models of best practice in other authorities, discussions with local volunteering organisations, and consultation and discussion with staff and unions have resulted in the key principles for the Libraries Volunteering Strategy:
- Paid jobs will not be replaced by volunteers; volunteers will complement not replace the work of paid staff.
  - Encourage voluntary participation by people from all sectors of the community.
  - Foster team work between volunteers and library staff, and help volunteers and staff grow in their respective roles.
  - Recognise and reward the invaluable contribution of volunteers to Brighton & Hove.
  - Ensure a positive volunteering experience for all those involved.

A copy of the full Volunteering Strategy is in Appendix 1.

#### **4. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT:**

- 4.1 Early drafts of this strategy were sent to staff, managers, trade unions and a range of partners and stakeholders and it has been amended in response to the range of comments received and meetings and discussions held. Agreement was achieved in January 2011 regarding the content of the strategy. Managers have also visited every library to discuss the Volunteer Strategy with frontline staff.
- 4.2 The strategy will be reviewed on a regular basis. It will build on how volunteers are already used in libraries and support this process properly with a volunteer manager.
- 4.3 Staff and trade unions are being consulted on an ongoing basis about the potential role of volunteers and associated role descriptions.

## 5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The in kind contribution made by volunteers will be reported annually. The resources to manage volunteers are available within the current budget.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley

Date: 2 August 2011

### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce

Date: 12 August 2011

### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Volunteering opportunities will be made available to all sectors of the community. The added value services that can be delivered using volunteers will especially benefit disadvantaged people, for instance the expansion of the Home Delivery Service, providing library books to housebound people.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 *Sustainable Consumption and Production*: No implications  
*Climate Change and Energy*: No implications.

*Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement*: No implications.

*Sustainable Communities*: The involvement of local people delivering added value services through volunteering is one way libraries engage the community and supports the development of sustainable communities.

### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no crime and disorder implications.

### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There is a risk that the Volunteering Strategy is misunderstood unless clear communication and management is put in place, due to the expanding use of volunteers to deliver core services in other authorities.

### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The Volunteering Strategy will contribute to the achievement of the citywide strategic priorities as laid out in '*Joining the Dots: a Triple Impact Volunteering Strategy for Brighton & Hove 2010-2015*'. It also supports

the 2020 Community Strategy, in particular strengthening communities and involving people.

Public Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 5.8 The provision of effective home library delivery services using volunteers will contribute to the health and wellbeing of people who are housebound.

**6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 No other options considered.

**7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 7.1.1 To improve the range and extent of libraries services, increase library use and to deliver better value for money.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

- 1. Libraries Volunteering Strategy.

**Documents In Members' Rooms:**

- 1. None.

**Background Documents:**

- 1. None.